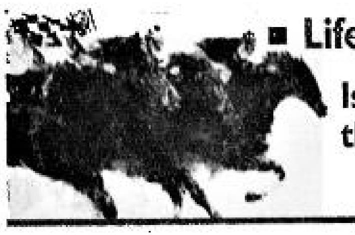


■ Lifestyle / E2

Isabel Diaz, the realist

■ Entertainment / C2

Pia's pictures of happy memories

■ Business/ B2-8

Wanted: 'Bridging' leaders

■ Sports / A26

Schumacher makes it 2 in a row

Tanong ng Bayan/ A24

FPJ, Ping unity: Maaayos pa ba?

ANG PAPEL NG IGLESIA

Poll campaigners form text brigades

IT HAS BEEN used to foment coup rumors, even helped to topple a government.

With the presidential election campaign nearing the homestretch, will it make or unmake a president?

In a country with 22 million mobile phone users—more than a quarter of the population—text messaging has become a potent

POLL/ A22

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Filipino Siamese twins successfully separated

RIYADH—Saudi doctors on Saturday successfully separated Filipino Siamese twins Mae and Ann, aged just 4 months, in a 14-hour operation broadcast live on television and the Internet from a Riyadh hospital.

"The operation ... was crowned with success," said surgeon Abdullah al-Rabiah, the head of a 50-strong team which worked into

FILIPINO/ A5

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

Monday, March 22, 2004 ★★ 74 pages / 7 sections / vol. 19 / no. 105 P18

website: www.inq7.net

Sacking of Dolphy linked to bailout

Reaction of GMA: I don't even know show

By Carlito Pablo, Christine O. Avendaño and Juliet Labog-Javellana

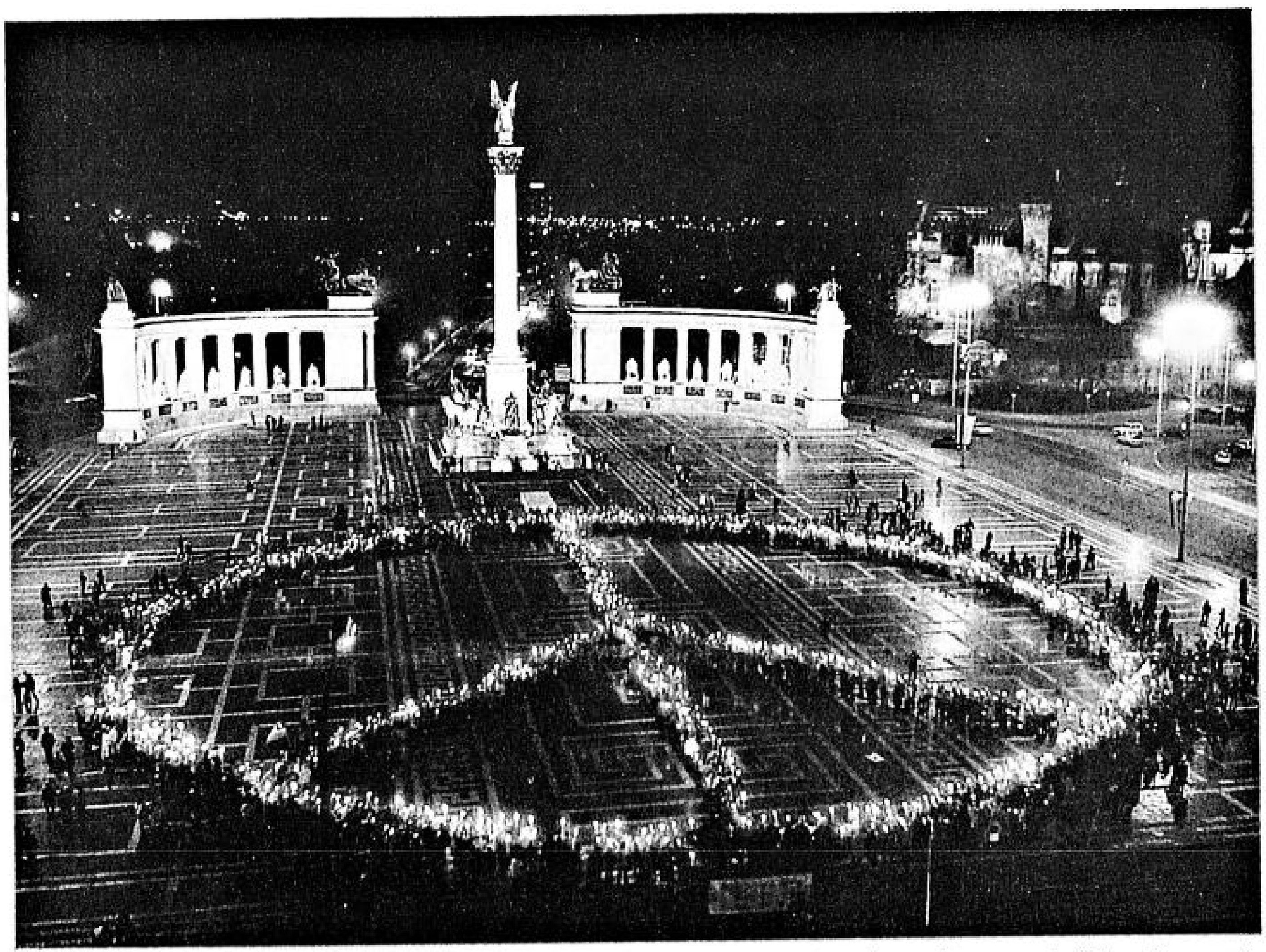
THE CANCELLATION of top comedian Dolphy's "Home Along Da Airport" TV show by ABS-CBN may have been politically motivated and linked to the multibillion-peso government bailout of Maynilad Water Services, a company controlled by the Lopez family which also owns the media giant.

"It was clearly politically motivated because of Dolphy's support for President Macapagal-Arroyo's main challenger, actor Fernando Poe Jr.," Richard Gomez and Armida Siguion Reyna, two of Dolphy's show biz friends, said in a statement.

In a press statement, Poe's media bureau chief Rodolfo Reyes said: "The unexpected scrapping of Dolphy's show could be a sweetener or bonus that Malacañang had squeezed from the Lopezes in the bailout of the Lopez-owned Benpres Holdings from the debt-riddled Maynilad Water Services, which the government had possibly taken control of in exchange for the family's go-signal to have its prize talent, Sen. Noli de Castro, be the running mate of President Macapagal-Arroyo." *(See related story on this page.)*

Gomez, chair of the group

SACKING/ A20



CARRYING torches; people form a peace symbol during an antiwar rally at Heroes' Square in Budapest, Hungary, on the first anniversary of the US-led invasion of Iraq.

EPA

US-led coalition now a lot less willing

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

A WAVE of anti-American demonstrations swept the globe during the weekend as the world marked the first anniversary of the US-led invasion of Iraq. Denouncing the war, thousands took to the streets in the United States, Spain, Japan, Australia, India, Britain, France, Germany, Greece, Italy and the Netherlands, and in some Middle East cities.

While the antiwar protests were generally orderly, protesters in Manila who marched to the US Embassy clashed with police. In Cairo, anti-American feelings ran high as demonstrators burned US flags.

Unfazed by this manifestation, US President George W. Bush called for "bolder action" against terrorism, citing the March 11 bombing in Madrid as a reason for US allies not to capitulate to threats of further attacks by terrorists associated with Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida.

"Any sign of weakness or retreat simply validates terrorist violence and invites more violence for all nations," Bush said. "It is the duty of every government to fight and destroy this threat to our people."

Bush's speech was intended to

US-LED/ A20

Taxpayers urged: Sue to stop gov't takeover

By TJ Burgonio and Gil Cabacungan Jr.

SAN MIGUEL, Bulacan—Want to nullify the deal? Go to court.

Former Solicitor General Frank Chavez urged taxpayers yesterday to petition the Supreme Court to stop the government from taking over the heavily indebted Maynilad Water Services.

The takeover is seen by some businessmen as a bailout of the Lopez family, which controls the water utility's major shareholder Benpres Holdings.

Chavez, a senatorial candidate of the Alyansa ng Pag-asa, said the people should file an injunction to nullify the deal, which he said was a clear case of government's "condonation of private sector indebtedness."

The deal had "shades of cronyism" prevalent during the Marcos regime, according to Chavez.

He said the planned takeover

TAXPAYERS/ A20

Group seeks bets' agenda for jobless

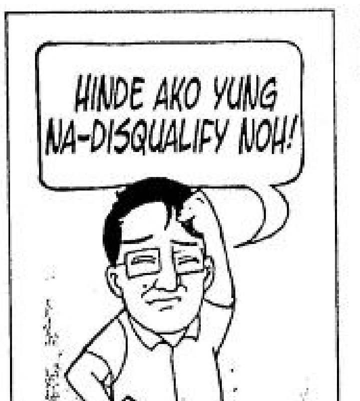
By Edson Castro Tandoc Jr.
Metro

ONE out of every four Filipinos who is ready to work is either jobless or underemployed. But all the presidential candidates are not presenting concrete plans to address the unemployment crisis, officers of the Alliance of Progressive Labor (APL) said yesterday.

"If they could not present any clear program to address this crisis, then they have no business running for the presidency," APL chair Daniel Edralin said at a press conference.

Clarence Pascual, consultant of the Labor Education and Research Network, said the unemployment rate today was higher than that during the 1998 Asian

GROUP/ A21



HINDE AKO YUNG NA-DISQUALIFY NOH!

Oops! It's Bro. Eddie, not Eddie Gil

By Norman Bordadora

IT WILL probably take more than the Commission on Elections to bury Eddie Gil for good.

The disqualified presidential candidate's namesake, Bro. Eddie Villanueva, was on the same Philippine Airlines flight from Cagayan de Oro City as fellow candidate Sen. Panfilo Lacson yesterday when the plane's

OOPS!/ A20

THE CHARM OFFENSIVE ELECTION 2004

Discipline, mem'ry for names, places, forever young

Editor's Note: The Inquirer *starts a series of essays on the campaign style and impact of the five presidential candidates, a two-parter for each. In alphabetical order, the series starts with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.*

By Ester G. Dipasupil
Desk Editor

(Last of two parts)

EXPERIENCE might just be the best teacher for Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo on the campaign trail, and maybe all the way—for the second time—to Malacañang.

And this does not only mean her two-and-a-half year tenure in the Palace, time, she says, spent making a "down payment" that she hopes to pay in full if the Filipino electorate lets her.

Experience is the battlecry of her K4 slate—the Koalisyon ng Katapatan at

DISCIPLINE/ A22

VAL HANDUMON

SAN PEDRO, LAGUNA: Surveys show her finally catching up with chief rival Fernando Poe Jr., but the President's camp is not about to hoist the victory flag—yet. Her campaigners say it's still anybody's ball game.

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The eastern section of Luzon will experience rains and occasional gusty winds with moderate to occasionally rough seas. The rest of Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms.
SOURCE PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/03/22/04

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

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Second FrontPage

Another Noli accuser surfaces

DE CASTRO

By Michael Lim Ubac

ANOTHER alleged extortion victim of vice presidential candidate Noli de Castro surfaced yesterday to denounce the senator for supposedly asking P2 million from him in exchange for a favorable feature on his prime-time current affairs program 'Magandang Gabi Bayan.'

Rafael T. Engle, however, said that he refused pay the amount, resulting in a "wicked, terrible and biased episode" on MGB. The TV episode was later used by authorities to tie Engle to the disappearance of his wife seven years ago.

Engle last week executed an affidavit to back up the criminal and administrative charges he is set to file against De Castro this week. A copy of the affidavit was obtained by the Inquirer.

Sought for comment, De Castro quickly dismissed the latest accusation against him as "politically motivated."

Through his lawyer Jesse Andres, De Castro said Engle should have filed the case against him soon after the MGB episode was aired seven years ago.

In his affidavit, Engle blamed De Castro for the injustice and harm that befell him during his "long and unfounded detention."

He said MGB destroyed his good name, family and livelihood.

Engle was imprisoned for seven years, until a Manila court acquitted him in January 2003.

He said that he intends to file cases against De Castro, his TV crew and ABS-CBN before the Office of the Ombudsman, the Department of Justice, the Ethics Committee of the Senate, and the courts of law.

"It is an uphill battle for me, indeed, for I have no money and no resources, but it is a battle I have to fight and win if only to stop Mr. Noli de Castro and his criminally-minded minions from continuing with their syndicated extortion," he said.

Engle worked abroad as a contract worker in the 1970s. Upon his return in 1983, he put up a number of restaurants, pension houses and a small hotel whose construction was not finished. He also invested P5 million in a real estate project in Malaysia.

But on Aug. 12, 1995, his fortune took a different turn after his estranged wife, Daisy Engle, was reported missing.

Desperate, he announced her disappearance in two tabloids.

Then one day, Engle recalled that an MGB crew interviewed him and offered to help him find his missing wife.

After the interview, one of the MBG crew later told him to prepare P2 million so that the episode would be favorable to him.

On the last Saturday of September 1995 when the TV episode was aired, Engle was shocked to find out that De Castro had put him "in a very bad light, saying that I had kidnapped my own wife and that I was a member of a criminal syndicate."

He said it was a "complete falsehood because ... I did not kidnap my wife and I certainly am not a member of any criminal syndicate. Clearly, my refusal to pay Mr. Noli de Castro and his crew the P2 million they tried to extort from me earlier led to this episode."

KNP solons joining Ping, says Butz

By Norman Bordadora

A GROUP of congressmen and other local officials from the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino in Luzon are set to defect to the camp of presidential bet Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson, Makati Rep. Agapito "Butz" Aquino claimed yesterday.

Aquino, Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino secretary general and Lacson's chief supporter, said the KNP congressmen and Lacson's group are scheduled to meet this afternoon.

Aquino, who didn't join Lacson's campaign sortie in northern Mindanao over the weekend, confirmed the transfer was a done deal and the meeting this afternoon would only be a formality.

"It's a done deal. We just have to iron out certain details of their joining us," said Aquino in a telephone interview.

Sources said the KNP congressmen and local officials were frustrated with the way the KNP campaign was being run, particularly at the local level.

Aquino earlier said that the period from March to April would be crucial for the opposition camps of Lacson and the KNP, represented by actor and presidential bet Fernando Poe Jr.

It also comes in the wake of the start of the local campaign period on March 25.

"This is already the start of the bandwagon. They are starting to come out," said Aquino of the expected shift of loyalties to Lacson.

Lacson on Saturday told reporters the group of congressmen and local officials had sent feelers to join his camp.

"Out of courtesy, I don't want to preempt our secretary general ... You could say that (it's already the start of a bandwagon) but we cannot act on (the feelers) until we have discussed it," Lacson said in Valencia City, Bukidnon.

'Debate no-shows face backlash'

By TJ Burgonio

SAN MIGUEL, Bulacan—Presidential candidate Raul Roco yesterday warned his rivals they could face an electoral backlash if they didn't show up for the first presidential debate tonight.

President Macapagal-Arroyo, Fernando Poe Jr. and Sen. Panfilo Lacson all declined the invitation to attend the debate dubbed "Tapatan sa Halalan 2004."

Ms Macapagal said she was not joining the debate since Poe was not going to be there. Lacson followed suit after learning Ms Macapagal had backed out.

Only Roco and evangelist Bro. Eddie Villanueva confirmed their attendance at the televised forum on population, poverty and human development at 7 p.m. at the ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.'s studios in Quezon City.

"I hope they forget all those who are absent. If you're absent, then you're out. Imagine, you're asking help from the public, and yet you can't do it upfront," Roco, standard-bearer of the Alyansa ng Pagasa, said when asked how women's groups should handle the no-shows.

"Come election day, the women should forget these candidates," he said.

The debate was organized by the Philippine Legislators Committee on Population and Development, Pulse Asia Inc. and the Philippine Political Science Association in cooperation with ABS-CBN.

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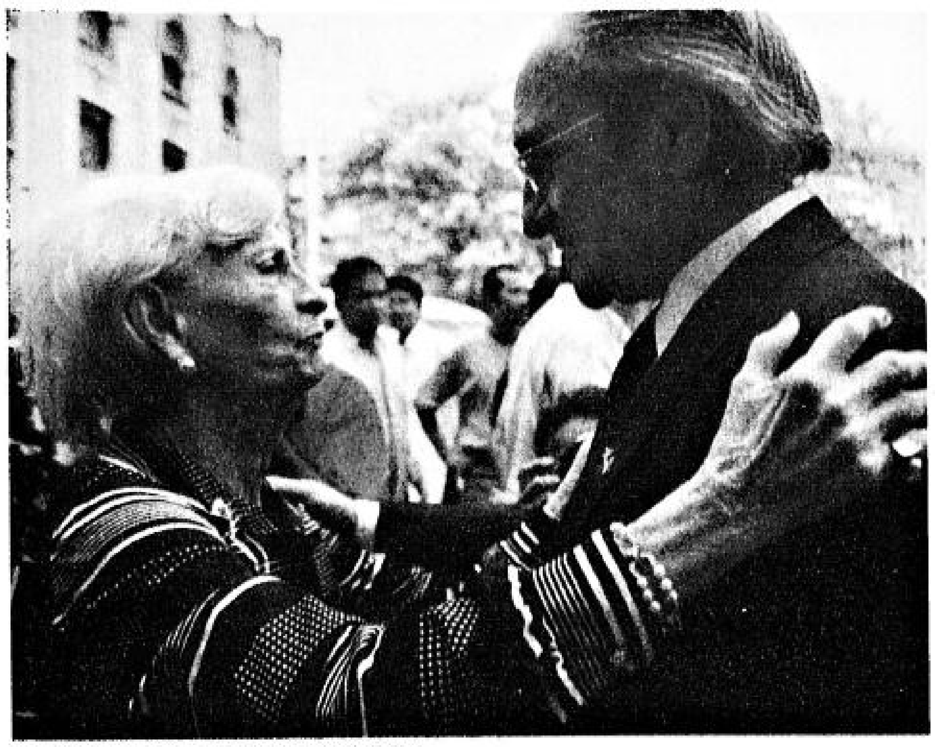

MANILA FEELS MADRID'S PAIN RANDY HORMILLOSA

Spanish Ambassador to the Philippines Ignacio Sagaz comforts a woman compatriot after the Mass celebrated yesterday at Manila's San Agustin Church for the 200 people killed in the March 11 bombings in Madrid. The body of the lone Filipino fatality of the blasts, 20-year-old Rex Reynaldo Ferrer, has been brought to his hometown of Santiago City, Isabela, for burial on Wednesday.

Military to remain on alert after polls

THE MILITARY will be on full alert until after the winners in the May 10 elections have been proclaimed.

In a 10-point policy guideline issued last week, Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita said that during the post-election period, troops would stay put in areas they had been assigned to by the Commission on Elections.

"The conduct of security operations and the safe transport of election personnel and paraphernalia must be ensured. The DND-AFP must remain on alert status until the result of the national and local elections are completed and winners are rightfully proclaimed," Ermita said.

He also reiterated his earlier order to military personnel to stay apolitical and keep out of partisan politics in this year's elections. "None of our officials and personnel must engage in any political activity, except to cast their votes on the day of election and perform the tasks prescribed by the Comelec," he said.

The defense secretary also said the military "must safeguard the conduct of elections on election day, ensure the security, secrecy and sanctity of the ballot, and safeguard the canvassing and all election paraphernalia until the winning candidates are proclaimed by the Comelec and the Senate." *Alcuin Papa*

Palace behind extort try on Japanese firms–Tatad

By Christine O. Avendaño

DAVAO CITY—A group identified with Malacañang was accused yesterday of trying to extort $3 million from three Japanese firms which bidded for the $204-million Light Railway Transit extension project, allegedly to raise funds for the election campaign of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino senatorial bet Sen. Francisco Tatad, who exposed the extortion try, had sought a rebidding of the project which will extend the LRT line from Baclaran to Monumento.

Tatad also noted that there was a "rush" to have the project awarded to the winning bidder.

At a news conference here, Tatad said his sources had told him that a group "closely identified with Malacañang" allegedly asked the three Japanese firms—Kawasaki, Sumitomo and Marubeni—that submitted bids for the project to shell out a "participatory fee of $1 million."

"Whether or not, the companies complied, we can't say," Tatad said, noting that he had yet to get the "smoking gun" on the alleged extortion try from his sources who were in the "circle" of the three Japanese firms.

He said he had in his possession documents involving the project, including the Department of Justice recommendation issued last month.

The DOJ has recommended the rebidding of the project to the Department of Transportation and Communications, the government agency implementing the project.

Apparently, Tatad said a complaint had been filed that prompted the DOJ to look into the pre-bidding procedure of the LRT project. This then led the justice department to recommend to "restart the bidding process because of some obvious violation of some bid security requirements," he said.

Tatad said that Marubeni was earlier taken out of the bidding process after its technical proposal was rejected.

Reyes new bane of smugglers

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has tapped anti-kidnapping czar Angelo Reyes to head another task force, this time aimed at fighting smugglers.

The President appointed Reyes to head the new National Anti-Smuggling Task Force (NASTF) on top of handling the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force (NAKTF) as its chief.

Lt. Col. Danilo Servando, Reyes' spokesperson, said members of the business community had requested that Reyes also lead the fight against smugglers.

"They were apparently happy with his performance in the anti-kidnapping front," Servando told the INQUIRER.

The President acceded to the traders' request by issuing Executive Order 297 creating the NASTF, envisaged to be a composite group of government agencies to prosecute an intensified campaign against smuggling.

The group will have representatives from the departments of trade and industry, agriculture and finance, and the Bureau of Customs. It will have a special response team composed of selected units from the Armed Forces and the Philippine National Police.

Christian Esguerra

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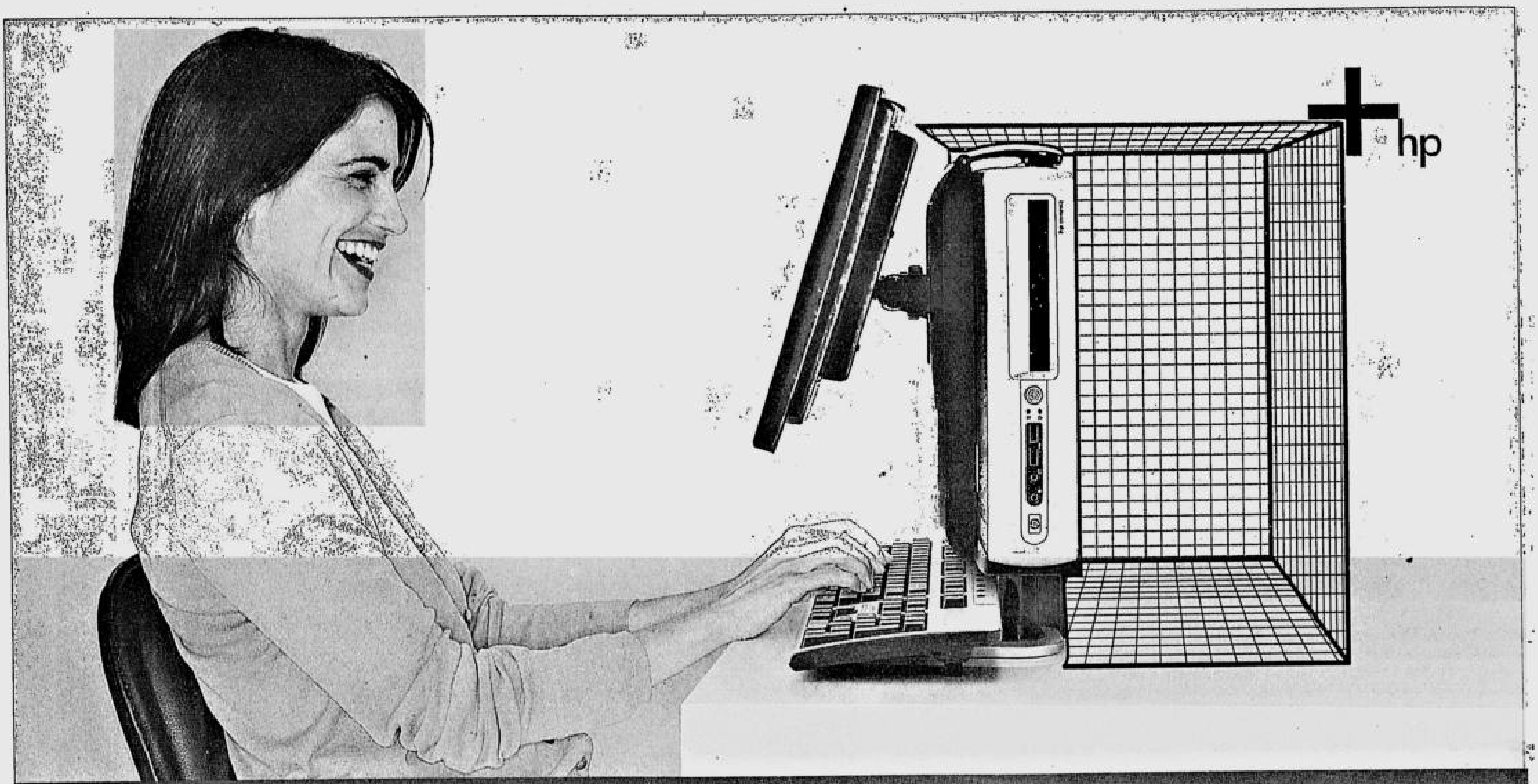

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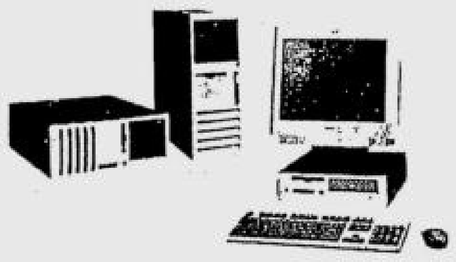

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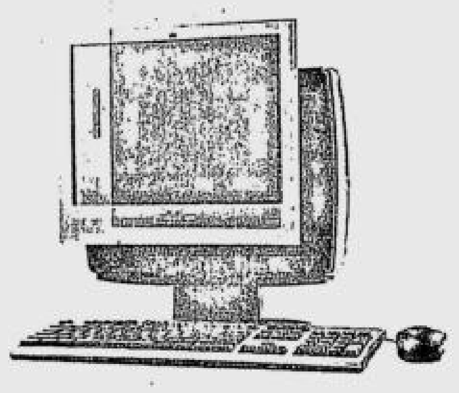

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*Source: IDC Asia/Pacific Quarterly PC Tracker, 3Q 2003

British exec runs 15 km for Pinoy kids

By Blanche S. Rivera

THIS WAS one bet the biggest businessmen in the country and even the Central Bank governor gladly lost—and disadvantaged Filipino children won.

Warner Manning, the British chief executive officer of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank in the Philippines, ran a 15-km marathon yesterday to collect more than P600,000 for the Children's Hour and the Stepping Stone Learning, Resource and Therapy Center for special children.

Manning, 51, took off from the 129-year-old HSBC branch in Binondo at exactly 5:30 a.m. yesterday and was at the newest HSBC branch in Fort Bonifacio by 7 a.m. Special children from the Stepping Stone Center welcomed him at the finish line.

The HSBC top man ran together with 80 donors and 143 bank employees.

"A lot of people thought I could not do it … Even my kids thought I was crazy because I'm 51!" a triumphant Manning told the INQUIRER at The Fort yesterday.

Manning had committed to pay the full amount of the pledges if he could not run the 15 km to Fort Bonifacio from HSBC's first branch in the Philippines which was the Binondo branch. If he completed the marathon, however, he would have had to shell out only 10 percent of the pledges, or a maximum of P50,000.

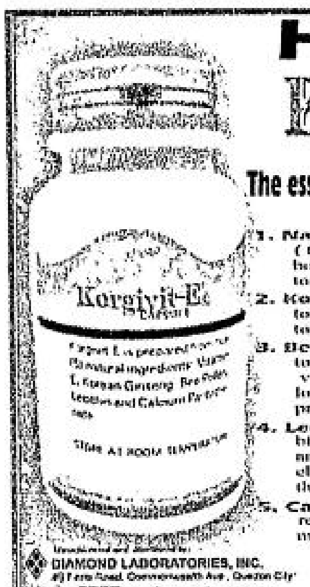
As Manning was preparing for the marathon, the dealing room of the HSBC treasury was abuzz with bets on whether he could do it or not. When it was learned that the determined executive was practicing thrice a week, the bets shifted to how long it would take him to finish the run.

Yesterday, it was Manning who collected from donors led by Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura, Energy Secretary Vince Perez, shipping magnate Doris Magsaysay-Ho, San Miguel Corp. president Ramon Ang, SGV's Washington Sycip, Bea Zobel and the Ortigas clan.

HSBC had distributed "Walk with Warner" pledge cards to the business community and "cornered" Manning's friends during a golf tournament sponsored recently by the bank. The pledges, which included those from children of HSBC employees, ranged from P50 to P100,000.

This was not the first time Manning, who has been in the Philippines a little more than a year, had tied up a charitable project with a personal goal.

In January last year, HSBC launched "Watch Warner's Weight," where Manning would collect pledges if he lost at least 20 lbs in two months. He lost 23 lbs and donors had to cough up P250,000 for Children's Hour.



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Filipino Siamese twins successfully separated

From page A1

Saturday night at the King Abdul Aziz Medical City.

The baby sisters, born on Nov. 12, 2003, in the Philippines, were in good health and in a stable condition on Sunday, the official Saudi Press Agency reported.

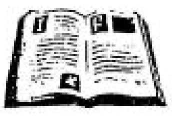
"It is their only chance, and a rare one, (for) a normal life," said their mother Marina Mazo at the start of the operation, which was paid for by Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abul Aziz.

The twins were joined at the abdomen, the pelvis and the perineum.

"Each of the twins has complete sexual organs and they can live a normal life," said senior urologist Ahmad Al-Shammari.

The operation was the eighth separation surgery in Saudi Arabia, Al-Rabiah said. *AFP*

THE DAILY GOSPEL



Monday, March 22, 2004
4th Week of Lent

1st Reading: Is 65:17-21
Gospel: Jn 4:43-54

When the two days were over, Jesus left for Galilee. Jesus himself said that no prophet is recognized in his own country. Yet the Galileans welcomed him when he arrived, because of all the things he had done in Jerusalem during the Festival and which they had seen. For they, too, had gone to the feast.

Jesus went back to Cana of Galilee where he had changed the water into wine. At Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill, and when he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went and asked him to come and heal his son, for he was at the point of death.

Jesus said, "Unless you see signs and wonders, you will not believe!" The official said, "Sir, come down before my child dies." And Jesus replied, "Go, your son is living."

The man had faith in the word that Jesus spoke to him and went his way. He was already going down the hilly road when his servants met him with this news, "Your son has recovered!" So he asked them at what hour the child had begun to recover and they said to him, "The fever left him yesterday in the afternoon about one o'clock." And the father realized that it was the time when Jesus told him, "Your son is living." And he became a believer, he and all his family.

Jesus performed this second miraculous sign when he returned from Judea to Galilee.

Commentary

They had rejected him when he was at home, but when they saw him performing in the city they changed their attitude. At home they felt small beside him, but in the city they felt big because of him: he had put Nazareth on the map. The ego enters everywhere and leads wherever it will. It cares about nothing except its own need to feel big-or to feel at least that it exists. Someone said cynically once, "Who cares what the general public thinks? Their opinion is a lottery." Not so, I'm afraid. Our opinions are not random like a lottery; they are fairly consistently the work of the ego.

Is there any hope for us? Of course! How could there be no hope for a Christian?

"Sir, come down before my child dies!" said the official. (John does not say whether this official was a Jew or a Gentile, so it is all of us.) Love made that official think and feel beyond his ego.

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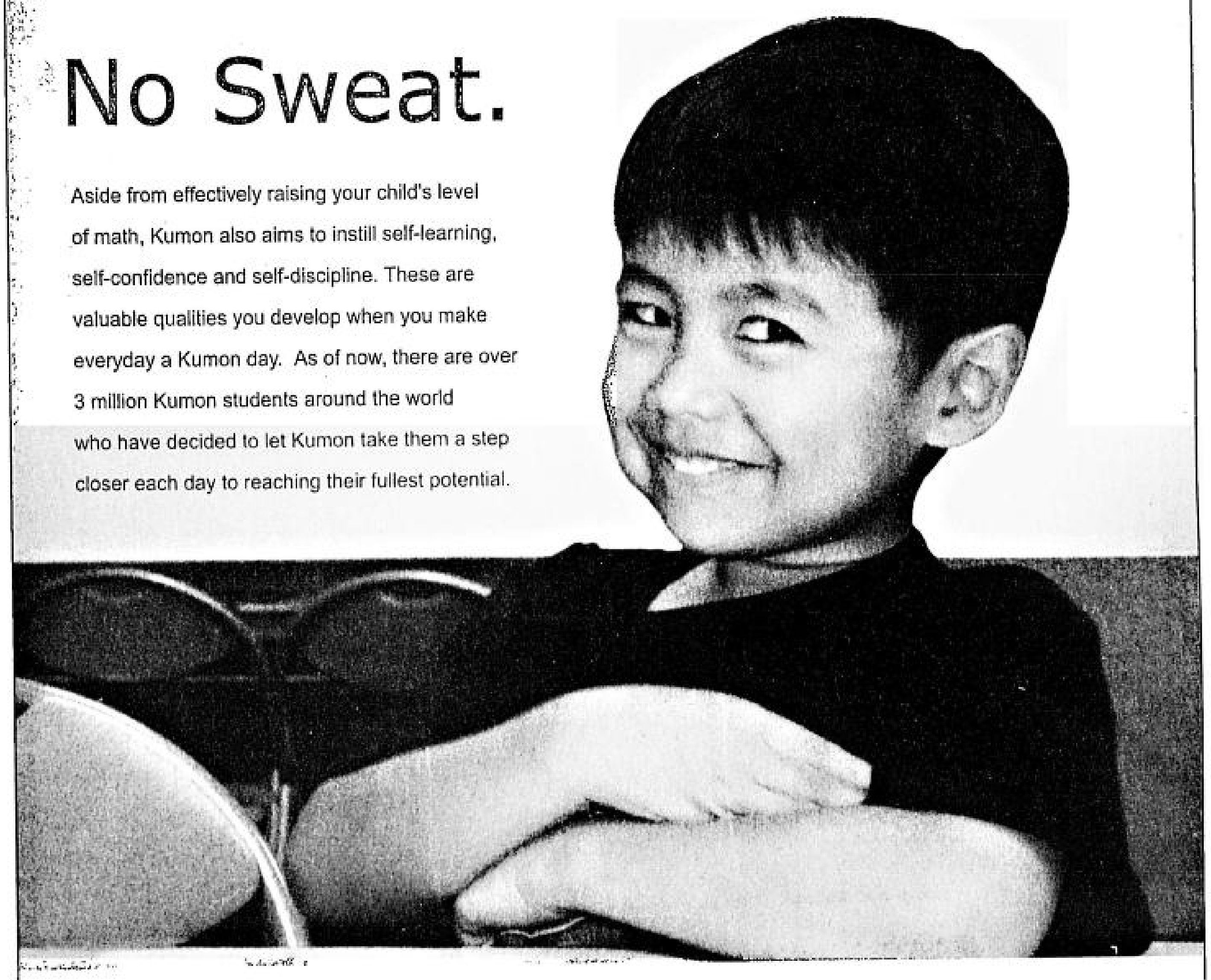

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Divers make final sweeps of SuperFerry wreck

By Tarra Quismundo

MOPPING-UP operations began yesterday inside SuperFerry 14, following three weeks of search, rescue and retrieval operations to recover as many victims as possible from the ill-fated ship.

Philippine Coast Guard Commodore Wilfredo Tamayo said PCG and Philippine Navy divers, Bureau of Fire Protection operatives, and volunteer search and recovery teams had begun checking every nook and cranny of the ship in case they had missed anything earlier.

"It is not a termination of operations. It is just a shift of focus of operations," Tamayo said.

Yesterday morning, the body of a boy between 5 and 7 years old, the skeletal remains of another person, and five body parts were retrieved from the A-deck.

This was the same part of the ship that had yielded more than 90 bodies and several bags of body parts.

DNA tests

The remains had been turned over to a special forensics team of the National Bureau of Investigation, Tamayo said, which would identify the bodies and body parts through DNA testing.

On Saturday, 10 bodies were recovered. More than 700 people survived the mishap, but 25 were still missing, according to the PCG information office.

'Butchoy'

Tamayo said tropical storm Butchoy, which made its way through the country over the weekend, did not affect their retrieval operations.

"It seems like (Butchoy) came on our terms. *Nakisama ang panahon* (The weather cooperated)," he said.

SuperFerry 14 is lying on its starboard side in Sisiman Bay off Mariveles, Bataan, to where the 10,000-ton ship was towed after it was ravaged by fire in the early morning hours of Feb. 27.

The ship had been bound for Cebu and Cagayan de Oro cities from Manila with 899 passengers and crew.

Tamayo said the mopping-up operations, the second phase in the retrieval operations, would take at least three days. But the schedule could change, he said, if more remains were found.

The search operations had earlier sent teams sweeping through the passenger ship at least five times.

Removal

The mopping-up operations would entail three more sweeps of every compartment of the ship, including its submerged starboard portion, Tamayo said.

Afterward, he said, the PCG would proceed to monitor and supervise the ship's removal from the site.

Tamayo said that since the PCG had no capability to move the ship, its owner, Aboitiz Transport System Corp., had to hire a private towing company for the job.

Malayan Towage Co., a private firm, was hired by Aboitiz to remove the debris on the ship's A-deck. Tamayo did not know, however, if the same company would haul away the wreck.

Protection

The PCG will also conduct what Tamayo called marine environment protection operations to ensure that the oil in the ship's tanks would not spill into the water and endanger marine life in the area.

An oil spill boom was placed around the ship shortly after it was towed to Mariveles to avert an oil spill, Tamayo said.

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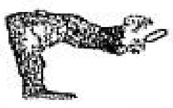

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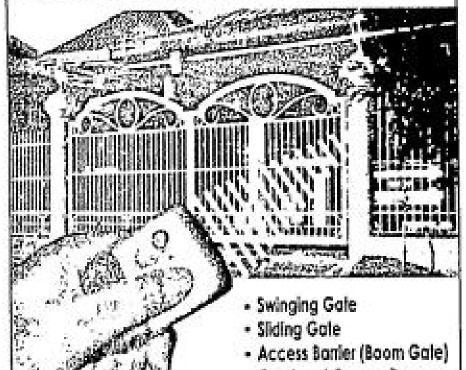

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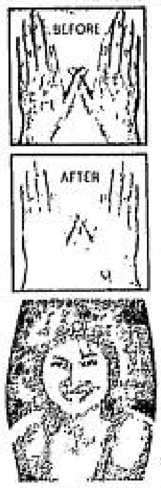

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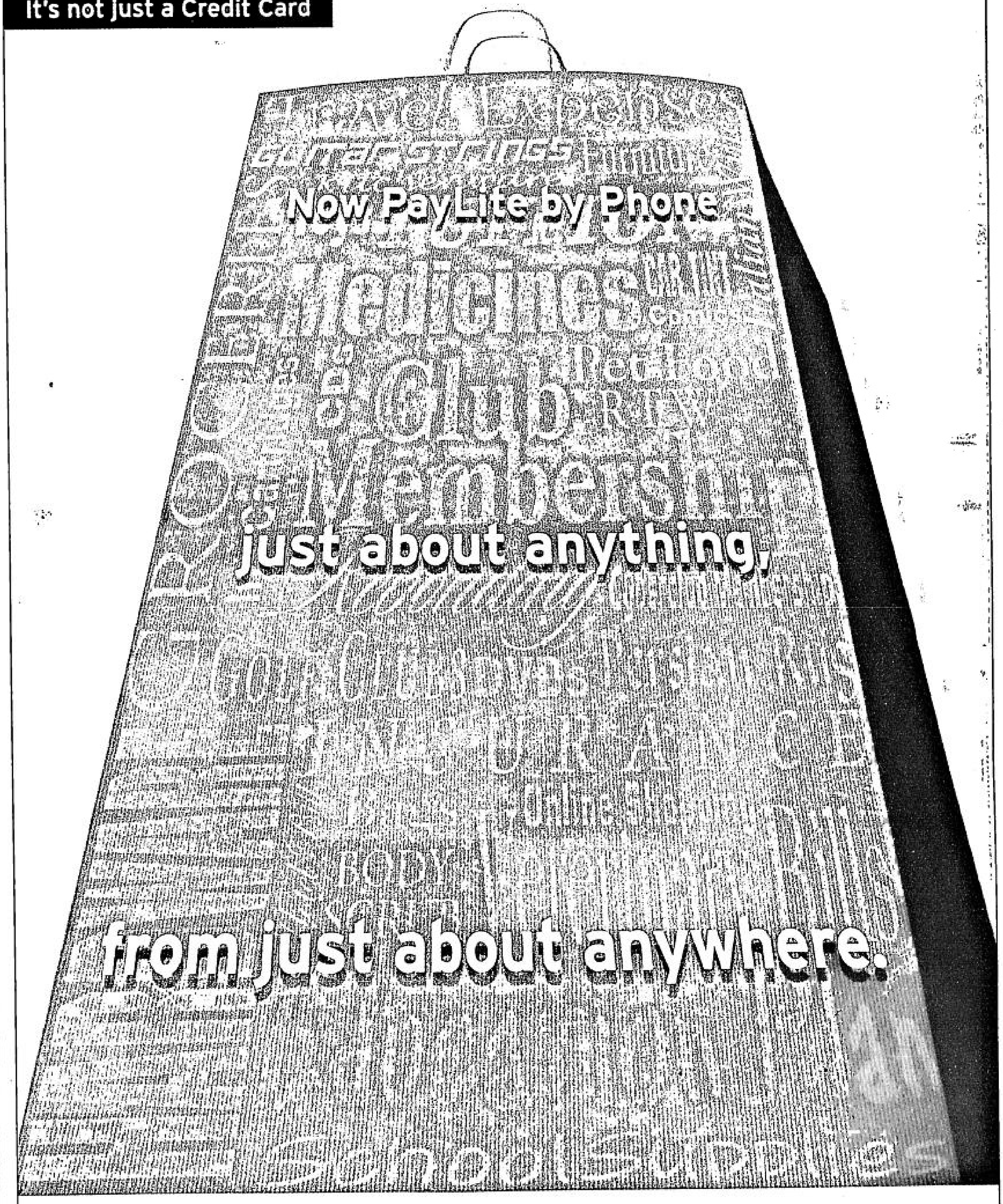

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Transport strike to push through in Pampanga

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Public transport groups belonging to the Pinagisang Samahan ng Tsuper at Operators Nationwide (Piston) in Pampanga will push through with their planned province-wide strike today.

More than 60 jeepney associations, 50 tricycle terminals and at least three associations of minibus drivers and operators in the province will join the strike, said Waldy Santos, Piston spokesperson in Pampanga.

But an official of the Samahan ng Tsuper at Operator ng Pilipinas (Stop) in Central Luzon assured commuters in the region that jeepneys and buses would continue to ply their regular routes today despite calls from other transport groups to stage a nationwide strike.

Tom Talavera, spokesperson of Stop and the Bukluran ng mga Progresibong Tsuper at Operator (Bumper) in Central Luzon, said members of the Stop alliance had yet to plan their next move after the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board rejected on March 16 their bid for a P1 provisional fare increase.

Stop, Talavera said, has more than 500,000 jeepney, tricycle and bus drivers as members nationwide.

He said the LTFRB has scheduled a hearing with Stop leaders on March 23 to discuss their demands for a P1.50 fare hike and the scrapping of the oil deregulation law.

Although the Stop alliance was disappointed with the suspension of any action on the fare hike petition, Talavera said the plan to paralyze transportation services should come from the council of different transport groups.

"The move to stage a nationwide transport strike should be decided by the whole transport sector. We will wait until Tuesday before we finally act on the issue," Talavera told the INQUIRER.

He said that based on their estimates, fuel prices had risen by almost P5.38 per liter since February 2002. In contrast, he said, the drivers' earnings had dropped to an all-time low of P70-P100 per day this year.

On March 1, Stop and other transport groups led a nationwide strike that paralyzed public transport in Metro Manila and in other key cities in the country. *Tonette Orejas and Allan Macatuno, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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Malaysian peace talks observers arrive today

By Jerome Aning

AN ADVANCE group belonging to the International Monitoring Team (IMT) from Malaysia will arrive today to lay the groundwork for next month's scheduled peace talks between the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Acting Foreign Affairs Secretary Sonia Brady said last week the 16-man survey team would precede the deployment of the Malaysian-led IMT which would monitor the truce between the government and the MILF ahead of the peace talks.

Malaysian Ambassador to the Philippines Mohammad Taufik told reporters yesterday the team would "look into the logistics, the situation in camps and operation areas, and make assessment of security on the ground for the eventual deployment of the IMT."

Taufik said only 10 to 12 members of the advance party would actually be flying into Manila, with the rest of the members coming from Malaysian Embassy staff.

The team's arrival, originally set for March 14, had been postponed because of the national elections in Malaysia yesterday.

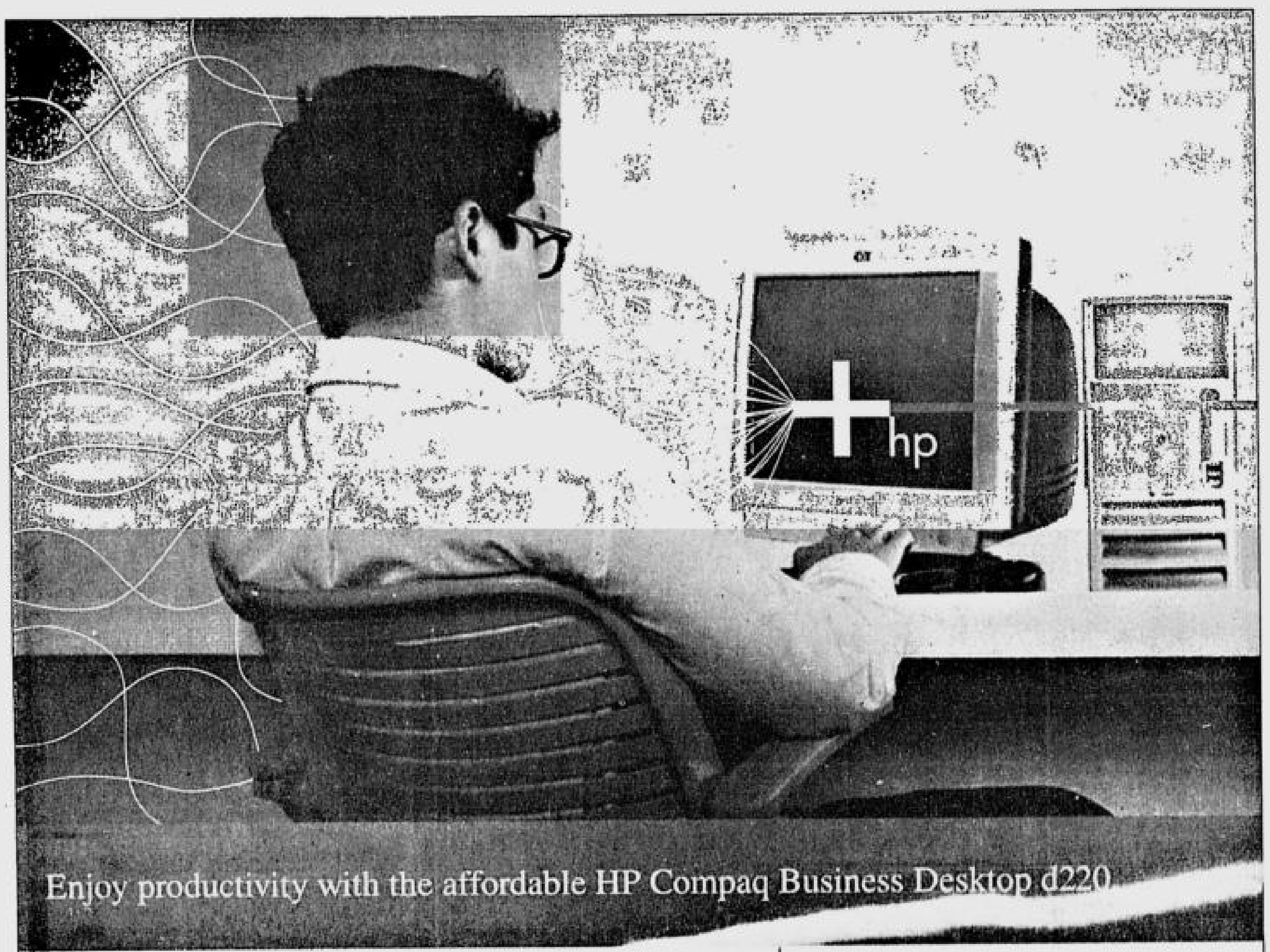
Deployment of the advance team was one of the agreements reached during the fifth exploratory talks between the Philippine government and the MILF held in Kuala Lumpur on Feb. 19 and 20.

Tomorrow, the advance team will call on Undersecretary for Special Concerns Rafael Seguis and Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Teresita Quintos-Deles. They will also hold a press briefing.

V. Velasquez; 46

VIRGILIO A. Velasquez died on March 1[illegible] is survived by his wife Miriam and children Vincent, Venice, Vermont and Erika.

Interment will be today at the Holy Cross Memorial Park in Novaliches after the 10 a.m. Mass.



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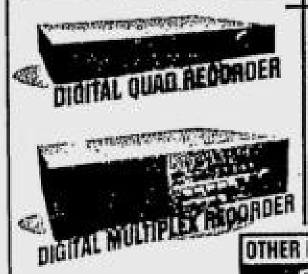

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Cebu prelate seeks house arrest for Erap

By Bernadette A. Parco
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal yesterday made a plea for former President Joseph Estrada to be placed under house arrest "in the spirit of reconciliation in this season of Lent."

Vidal, in a one-page statement issued last night, said he was making the request because the "businessmen, the religious and political sectors in Cebu" had asked him to make the appeal "with the hope of promoting peace and reconciliation in the country, especially among warring political leaders."

"At this point, when many are calling for charity and compassion in the government's treatment of the former President as he awaits his trial, I would like to point out the necessity of expressing our Christian values in the humane, fair and just treatment of someone who has not yet been proven guilty by a court of law," the prelate said.

This was the second appeal that Vidal had made to the government on the issue of placing Estrada under house arrest. He made a similar call in December 2002, as a "Christmas gift to the former President."

At that time, the Cardinal said he had not been pressured by the Estrada camp into making the appeal. He had said that he was making the call because the Cebu Presbyteral Council had decided to join the clamor to have Estrada placed under house arrest.

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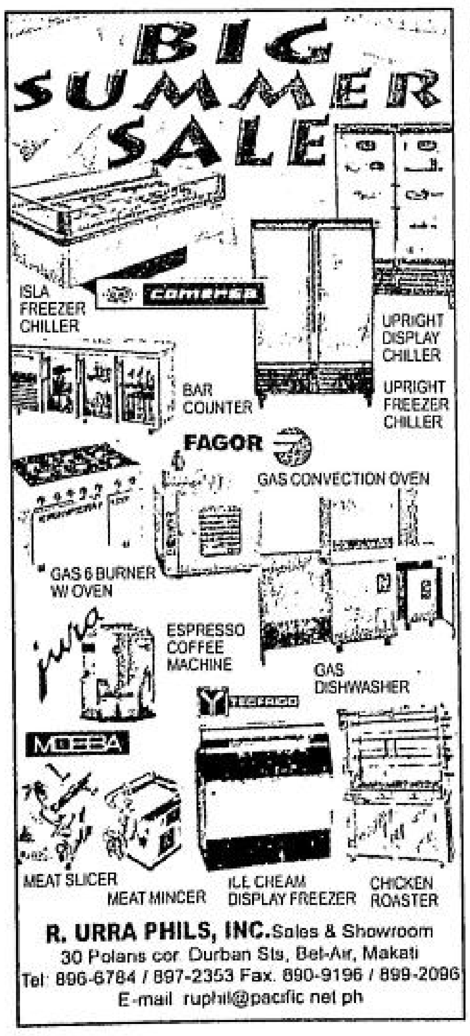

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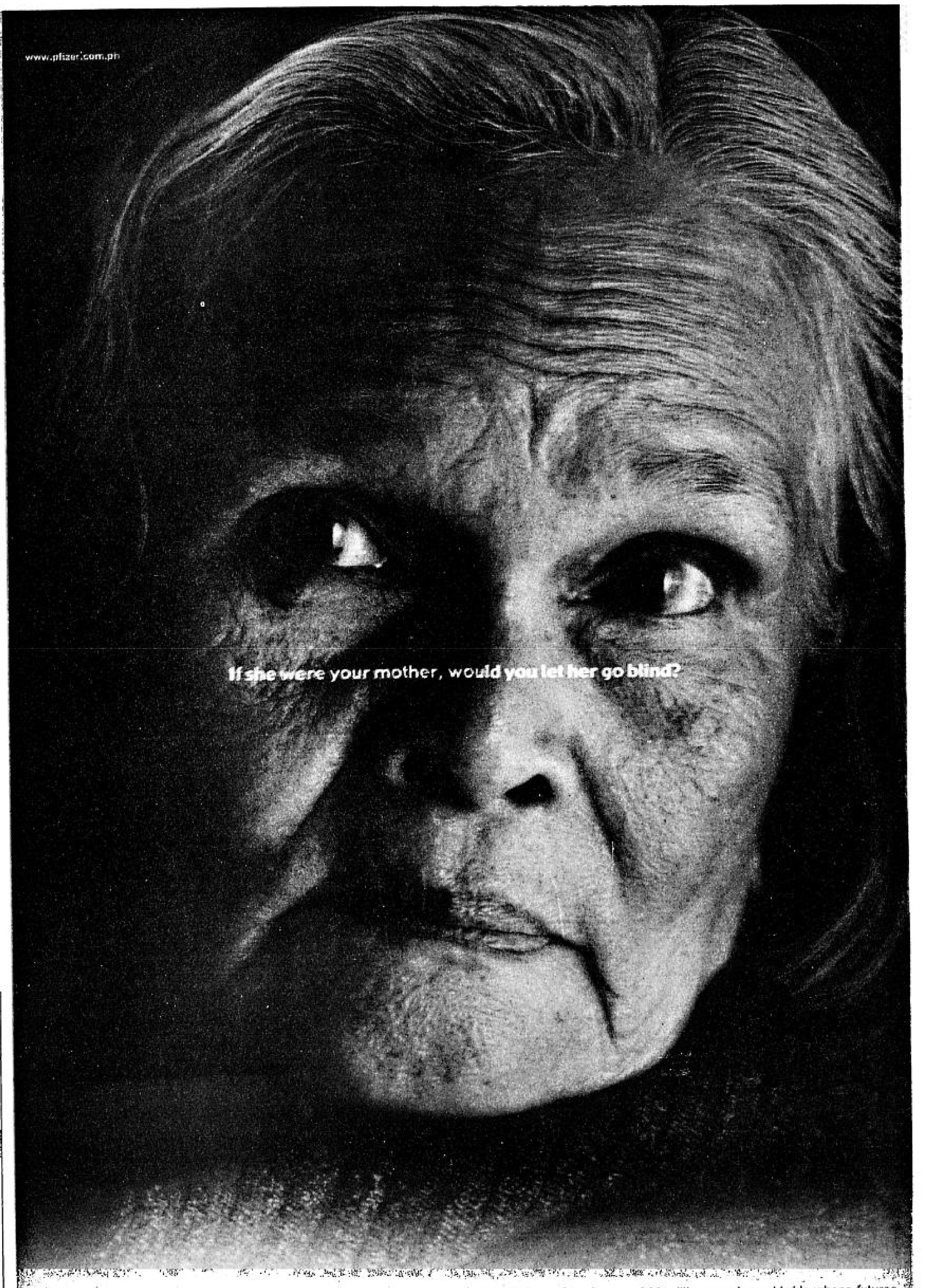
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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Turmoil erupts in Taiwan over close election

TAIPEI—Taiwan's High Court ordered ballot boxes to be sealed Sunday after the opposition disputed President Chen Shui-bian's election victory because of a mystery assassination attempt and spoiled ballots.

Protests erupted across the island after Chen's victory by less than 30,000 votes over challenger Lien Chan in Saturday's poll, which took place just hours after the president was shot and lightly injured.

Kuomintang (KMT) leader Lien rejected the result and demanded a recount, saying too many questions remained unanswered over Friday's assassination attempt and the existence of a large quantity of spoiled ballot papers.

Thousands of angry KMT supporters faced riot police and water cannons across barbed wire outside the presidential palace Sunday as judges prepared to decide whether to order a recount.

Taiwan's premier denounced violence by some KMT supporters but backed the opposition's right to question the vote after the closest election in the short democratic history of the island off southern China.

"We should wait silently for the judiciary to make a fair and just ruling," Yu Shyi-kun told reporters.

The statement followed hours of turmoil after a visibly angry Lien, the losing KMT candidate, demanded answers to questions about the assassination attempt on Chen and Vice President Annette Lu on Friday.

Authorities said Chen, 53, and Lu, 59, suffered minor bullet wounds after a mystery attacker fired at least two shots as the pair travelled in an open-top jeep during campaigning in the southern city of Tainan.

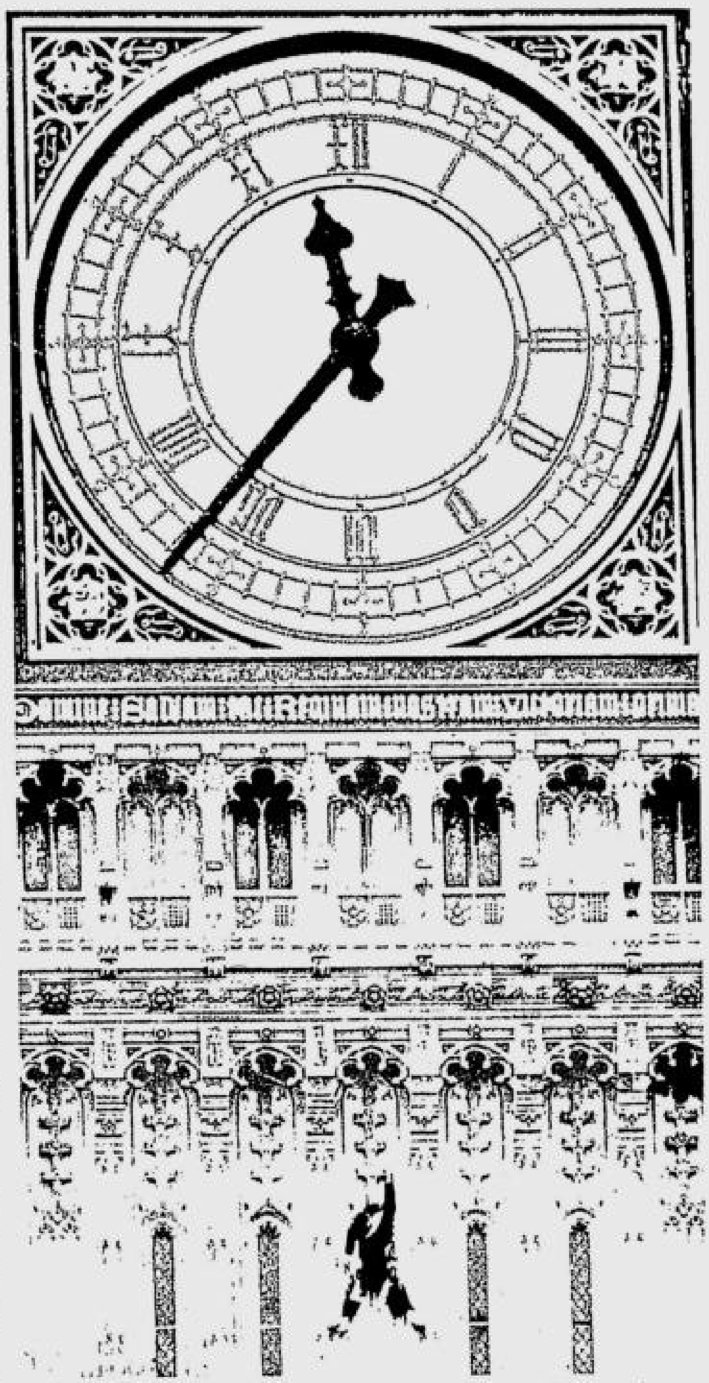
Doctors Sunday released pictures of Chen undergoing surgery, but the timing of the shooting and police silence afterward have fueled conspiracy theories about the incident, which analysts said boosted Chen's support.

Party polls showed the KMT leading by 7 to 8 percent before the shooting, according to Gilles Guiheux, director of the Hong Kong-based French Centre for Research on Contempary China.

Demonstrators clashed with police at Taichung in central Taiwan while in Taipei, the KMT leadership called on supporters to join a march from the presidential building.

A Taiwan High Court official said a panel of judges would decide if there was enough evidence to hold a partial or total islandwide recount. A decision may be made on Monday, according to a senior ruling party legislator.

In Saturday's election, more than 337,000 votes were declared invalid by the Central Election Commission compared with 120,000-130,000 in the island's previous two elections. *AFP*



DEMONSTRATOR Simon Westaway from Greenpeace climbs up the clock face on London's landmark Big Ben clock tower in Parliament Square, March 20. Two demonstrators scaled the tower to the clock face 100 meters above London on Saturday ahead of a demonstration to mark the first anniversary of war in Iraq. REUTERS

Mystery shrouds shooting

TAIPEI—Mystery surrounded an attempt to kill Taiwanese President Chen Shuibian hours before his reelection bid. Rage greeted his razor-thin victory as a huge pile of invalid ballots outnumbered his winning margin 10 times.

"We have not had a clear explanation of the truth of yesterday's shooting," said opponent Lien Chan. "Its impact on this election needs no words and its impact was direct. The doubts surrounding it give us one common impression—this is an unfair election."

The National Security Bureau ruled out a political motive or Chinese involvement. But no one has yet been arrested and many in Taiwan voiced suspicion about the unprecedented attack.

Some suspect underground gambling rings, which have logged millions of dollars of bets on the election. Others do blame arch-foe China, which views Taiwan as part of its territory and detests Chen for pushing the island toward independence.

One theory has the rival Nationalists as masterminds.

Another says it was an inside job by supporters of the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) to gain last-minute support.

All may prove to be bred by fevered imaginations—though there must have been some motive.

But one thing was clear: as a result, a large group of traditionally Nationalist voters got no chance to vote.

After the attack, Chen activated the national security apparatus, meaning 200,000 military and police—traditionally Nationalists—were too busy to vote, said Daniel Hwang, a spokesperson for Lien's running mate, James Soong. *Reuters*

Worldwide protests slam Iraq occupation

NEW YORK—More than a million anti-war protesters poured into the streets of cities around the globe on Saturday's anniversary of the invasion of Iraq to demand the withdrawal of US-led troops.

From Sydney to Tokyo, from Santiago, Chile, to Madrid, London, New York and San Francisco, demonstrators condemned US policy in Iraq and said they did not believe Iraqis are better off or the world safer because of the war.

Journalists estimated that at least a million people streamed through Rome, in probably the biggest single protest.

In London, two anti-war protesters evaded security to climb the landmark Big Ben clock tower at the Houses of Parliament, unfurling a banner reading "Time for Truth."

About 25,000 demonstrators gathered in central London, many carrying "Wanted" posters bearing images of President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair, his main war ally.

In most places, the demonstrators numbered in the tens of thousands, compared with hundreds of thousands who marched in big cities on Feb. 15, 2003, to try and prevent the conflict.

The peaceful protests began in Asia and moved to Europe and the Americas in what organizers billed "a global day of action."

In New York, scene of the Sept. 11, 2001, hijacked plane strikes by Islamic militants, tens of thousands created a sea of signs in midtown Manhattan, many of them criticizing Bush, who is running for reelection in November.

Among the signs spotted in the crowd were, "Money For Jobs and Education not for War and Occupation" and "Bush Lies" and "End Occupation of Iraq."

In San Francisco, a diverse group of protesters gathered for a raucous rally in front of City Hall, where dumping Bush in November was also the central theme.

"Are we ready to drop Bush?" local politico Tom Ammiano asked the crowd. "Are we ready to impeach Bush?" The crowd responded with an enthusiastic "yes" to both queries.

Actor Woody Harrelson said the rally "is about uniting everyone. ... We want peace."

In Crawford, Texas, about 900 anti-war activists gathered at a park near President Bush's ranch. The T-shirt of choice read: "Crawford, Texas, Bring your village idiot home."

Anti-war activists gathered in Fayetteville, North Carolina, home of Fort Bragg, one of the biggest US military bases. Soldiers, veterans and local residents staged two counter-demonstrations, but there were military veterans and families among the anti-war groups. *Reuters*

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Interested suppliers are requested to attend the Pre-Bid Conference scheduled on March 30 2004, 9:00 a.m. at the 25th Floor, Conference Room, LANDBANK Plaza, M. H. del Pilar, Malate, Manila.

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DAY 03 SUANBO (B,L,D) AFTER BREAKFAST, PROCEED TO SUANBO AND ENJOY CHOONGJU LAKE CRUISE, EXPLORE GOSU LAVA CAVE, AND CHECK IN AT CHOSUN HOTEL
DAY 04 MT SORAK (B,L,D) AFTER BREAKFAST, PROCEED TO MT SORAK, VISIT MT SORAK NATIONAL PARK INCLUDING SHINHUENGSA TEMPLE, AND KWONGUEMSUNG CABLE CAR, AND THEN VISIT NAKSANSA TEMPLE AND EUISANGDAE THEN GO, CHECK IN AT KENSINGTON HOTEL
DAY 05 SEOUL (B) AFTER BREAKFAST PROCEED TO SEOUL CITY TOUR KYUNGBOK'S PALACE, FOLKLORE MUSEUM, BLUE HOUSE AND WORLD CUP STADIUM LATER IN THE AFTERNOON VISIT THE LOTTE WORLD. AFTER DINNER, CHECK IN AT THE HOTE.
DAY 06 SEOUL/MANILA (B,L) AFTER HOTEL BREAKFAST. SHOPPING TIME. THEN ON THE WAY TO AIRPORT STOP BY KOREAN SOUVENIR AND FOOD MARKET, THEN TO AIRPORT [illegible]
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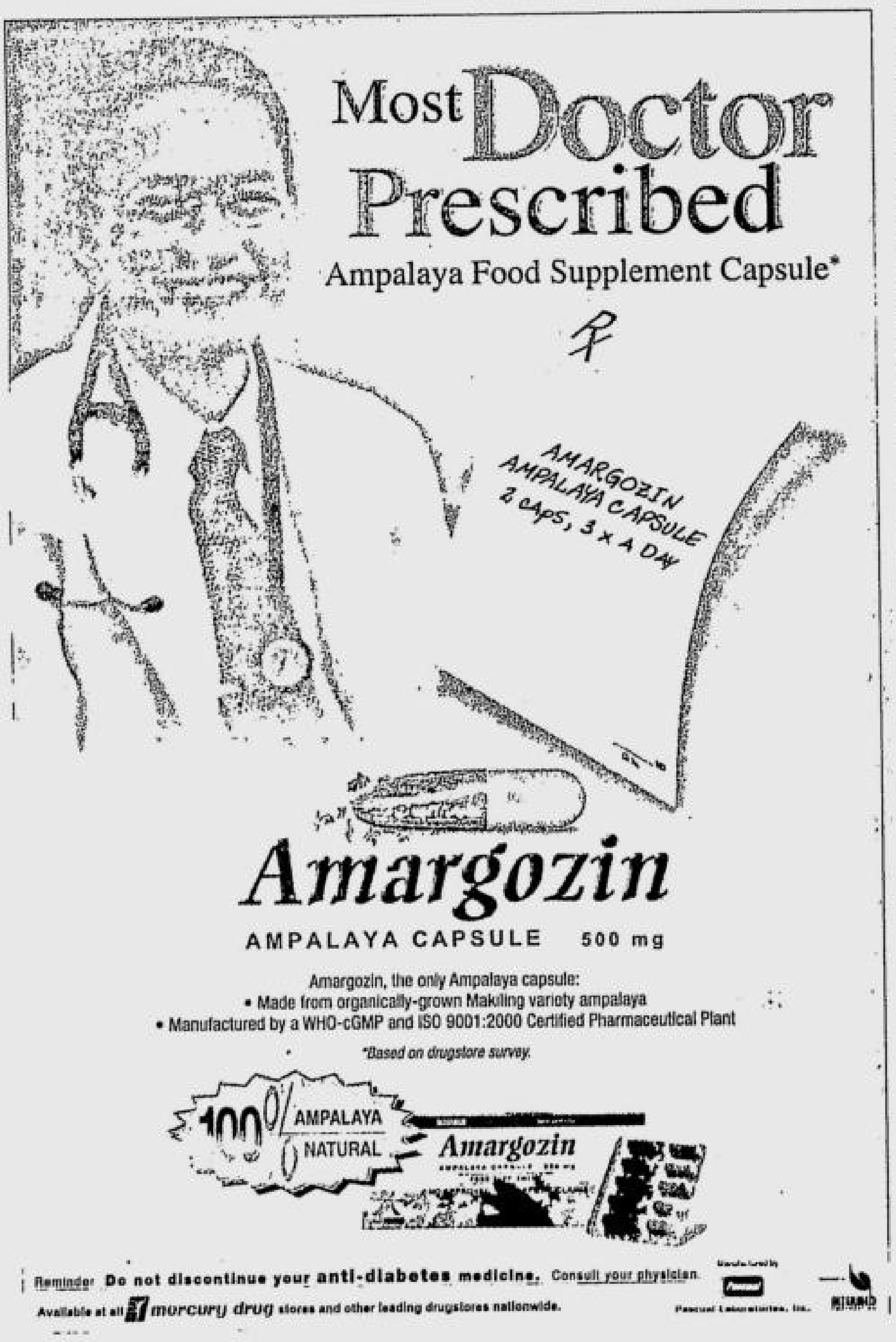

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Pakistan doubts Al-Zawahri among surrounded militants

WANA, Pakistan—Pakistan's army has arrested over 100 suspected militants after five days of intense battles near the Afghan border but said it was unlikely al-Qaida number two Ayman al-Zawahri was among those still surrounded.

Instead a senior commander said the "high-value target" whom the militants were thought to be protecting was probably an Uzbek or Chechen militant leader.

Pakistani forces began to flush out foreign militants and local tribal allies on Saturday from their heavily fortified mud-walled compounds in the country's wild west, after raining fire on their hideouts overnight.

But the army continues to face the stiffest resistance it has encountered since launching operations last year in the lawless tribal areas in an attempt to find al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden and his supporters.

Commanders said the fierce defense suggested rebels were trying to protect a "high-value target," with officials initially speculating it might have been Zawahri.

But intercepted rebel radio communications suggested the mystery militant was Uzbek or Chechen. Zawahri is Egyptian.

"All the intercepts we have been receiving have been in the Chechen or Uzbek language," Lt. Gen. Safdar Hussain told reporters in the western town of Wana, near the fighting.

Zawahri, a doctor, is regarded as the brains of al-Qaida and a key figure behind the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States.

An intelligence source said two Chechen militants, named as Danyar and Quaran Ata, were believed to be in the area and prominent Uzbek militant, Tahir Yaldashev, may be with them.

The offensive, involving several thousand soldiers, is the biggest Pakistan has waged since it joined the US-led war on terror after the Sept. 11 attacks.

Dozens of fighters have been killed and about 100 suspected militants, many of them foreigners, captured, the army said.

"They are extremely professional fighters. They wait for our troops to move within five to seven meters and then open fire," said Hussain, the top military commander in the region.

"They are taking us from every direction whenever our troops have moved in and we are not knowing if the locals are with us," he said. "With an undefined target like this, it is practically chasing shadows." Reporters saw an army truck carrying 30 or 40 prisoners, blindfolded and with hands tied behind their backs.

Most were bearded and wearing traditional Pakistani long shirt and baggy trousers. Some wore Muslim prayer caps, others the brown woollen hats common in the mountains.

Hussain said the militants were defending long-established camps in the wild South Waziristan tribal area, with an extensive network of trenches and sentries on watchtowers.

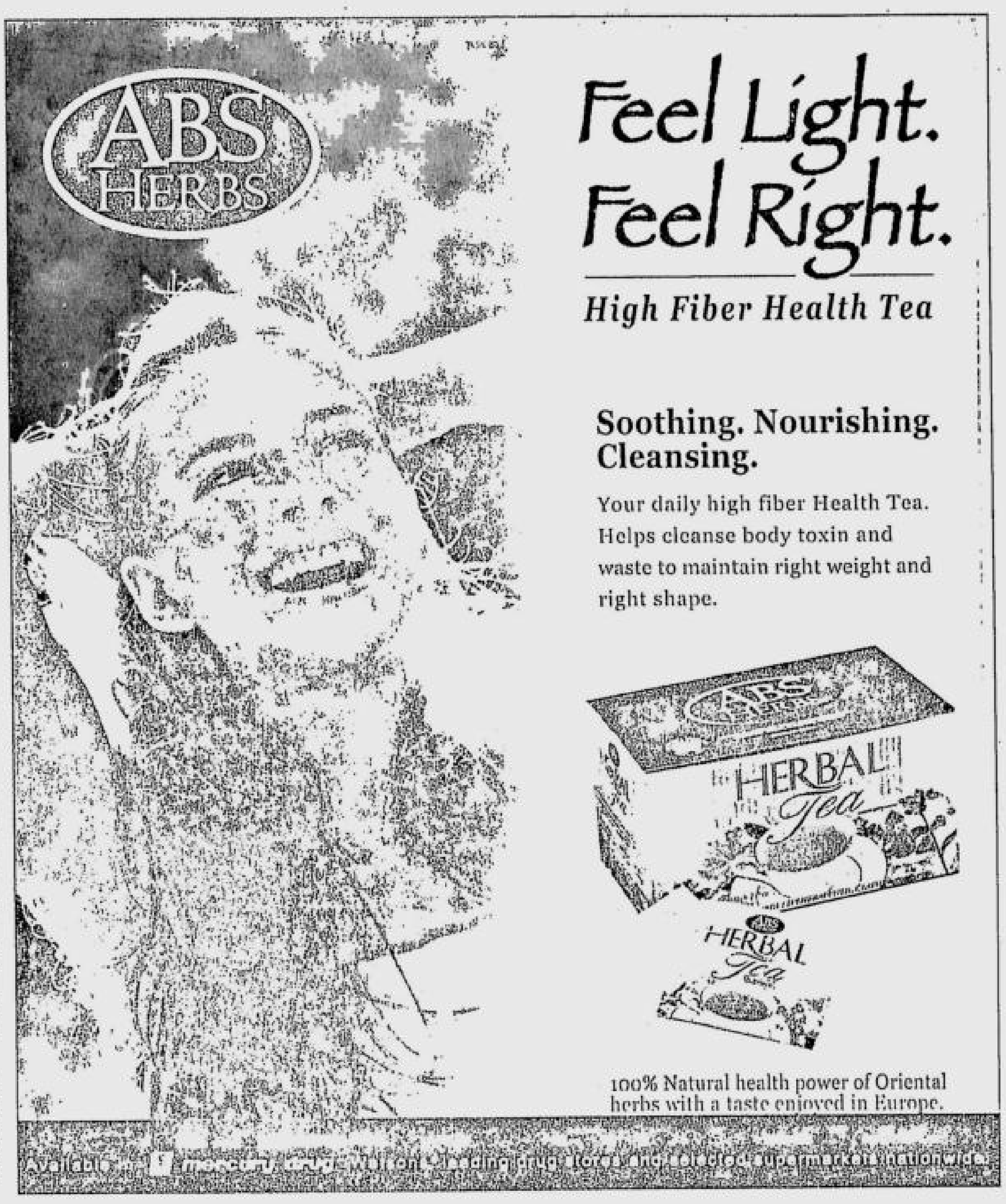
Pakistani forces first went in on Tuesday but ran into a hail of fire and had to retreat in disarray, losing 16 men, local officials said.

Since then they have stationed 2,500 troops in a 60-km cordon around the area, with a similar number fighting and searching houses inside the zone.

Up to 13 civilians died on Saturday when their vehicles were fired on, but it was unclear by whom. A senior security official said militants had fired on the vehicles inside the army cordon but two local officials said an army helicopter had fired.

Hussain said the battle would soon be over.

About a dozen Americans have been giving Pakistani forces technical assistance in intelligence gathering but no US ground troops have been involved, the military said. *Reuters*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WORLDBRIEFS

Kosovo crisis

PRISTINA, Serbia and Montenegro—Western procrastination over the future of Kosovo must share the blame for an explosion of violence in the UN protectorate, according to former senior envoys to the Balkans. By shrinking from the issue of independence, while failing to establish security and the rule of law, the United Nations and Nato allies let Kosovo become a tinderbox again, lit this week by Albanian extremists as it was by Serbs in 1999, they said. Kosovo had been pushed to the back burner since the UN and Nato took it over from Serbia in 1999 after a bombing campaign to stop Serbian oppression of the ethnic Albanian majority. *Reuters*

Queen Juliana, 94

AMSTERDAM—Queen Juliana, dubbed the "people's queen" after she helped the Netherlands recover from World War II and oversaw the independence of its last remaining colonies, died on Saturday at the age of 94. The bicycling monarch, who abdicated in 1980, broke with convention by shopping at her local supermarket and sending her children to state school. She died of a lung infection at 5:50 a.m. in the central Dutch Soestdijk palace where she lived most of her life. *Reuters*

8 simul transplants

MIAMI—Doctors at the University of Miami have performed a record-breaking eight simultaneous organ transplants on an 8-month-old Italian baby with a life-threatening muscle disease, the hospital announced. Alessia Di Matteo, of Genoa, received the liver, stomach, pancreas, small intestine, large intestine, spleen and two kidneys from another infant during a 12-hour procedure Jan. 31 at the university's Jackson Memorial Medical Center. News of the procedure was withheld until Alessia had passed the period of greatest risk of complications, the hospital said late last week. Alessia was born July 4 with megacystis microcolon syndrome, which prevents the stomach, intestines and kidneys from functioning normally. *AFP*

Malaysia votes

KUALA LUMPUR—Malaysia's modernist multireligious ruling coalition headed for almost certain victory in elections Sunday, but Islamic fundamentalists predicted big gains in the struggle for the votes of the Muslim majority. With ethnic Chinese and Indian voters holding the balance of power, Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's National Front expects to win big nationally but fears a slide toward the Islamists could shake the country and rattle foreign investors. Abdullah, himself an Islamic scholar, campaigned hard in the rural Muslim heartland in the north, desperate to woo voters away from the fundamentalist opposition to what he calls "modern and progressive" Islamic rule. *AFP*

Probe of UN in Iraq

KUWAIT/UNITED NATIONS—US Secretary of State Colin Powell said on Saturday he was "deeply concerned" about allegations of corruption in a defunct UN-run humanitarian program for Iraq and welcomed UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's proposed probe. Annan has been under pressure from Iraqi leaders as well as Powell and other US officials to investigate accusations of kickbacks and the siphoning off of funds by former President Saddam Hussein from the multibillion-dollar UN oil-for-food program. The program handled more than $65 billion in oil revenues for food, medicine and other civilian goods ordered by Iraq in an attempt to ease the impact of 1991 Gulf War sanctions. It was shut down last year after the US-led invasion of Iraq that toppled Saddam. *Reuters*

2 GIs killed in Iraq

BAGHDAD—A rocket attack near the flashpoint Iraqi town of Falluja, west of Baghdad, killed two US soldiers and wounded seven, the US military said on Sunday. Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt, deputy director of operations for the US army in Iraq, said three rockets hit a forward operating base and two impacted outside at about 8 p.m. on Saturday. The wounded comprised six from the army and one from the navy, he said *Reuters*

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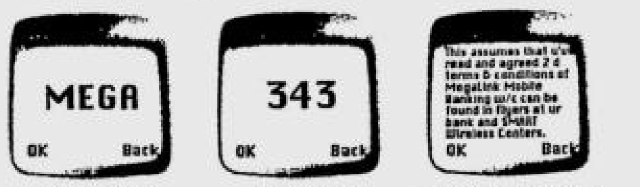

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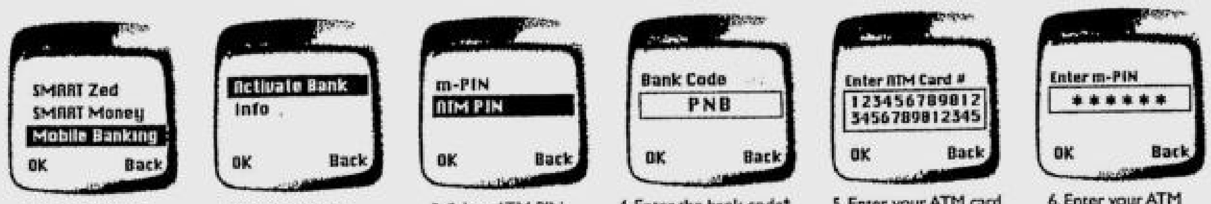

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OPINION

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Acsa all over again

EDITORIAL

IF we had any doubt that the criminal charge the National Bureau of Investigation filed earlier this month against finance department official Ernesto Hiansen was a grievous mistake, the NBI's official explanation cleared it for us.

The other week, lawyer Jose Justo Yap, chief of the agency's anti-graft division, dismissed any and all objections to the filing. "We have a strong case. We would not recommend the filing of charges against Hiansen and his staff if we do not believe they are liable [for] the scam," Yap said. He then urged Hiansen to raise his defense before the Ombudsman if he truly believed he wasn't guilty.

We've heard this before, haven't we? The same supercilious tone, the same arrogant attitude, the same we-can't-make-a-mistake script.

In August 2002, the NBI inadvertently presented Land Bank cashier Acsa Ramirez, the whistleblower in a P203-million tax diversion scheme, as a suspect in the same scam. Despite evidence staring them in the face, the NBI—once routinely referred to as the country's elite law enforcement agency—refused to own up to its mistake. It took the NBI well over a year to drop the case against Ramirez and tender its apologies.

The NBI's absolutist position on the Hiansen affair may be rooted in institutional shortcomings. (An organization that prides itself on being above the norm is often led by its corporate self-image to think it can do no wrong.) But the agency's damn-the-torpedoes approach fits nicely into the pattern that, on and off over the last decade, has come to characterize the government's handling of the tax credit scam.

All told, the scam may be responsible for defrauding the government of some P26 billion in taxes; but the fate of the government case in the "grandmother of all scams" has been a hostage to circumstance.

To cite only three instances:

In January 2002, Rep. Oscar Moreno accused Aniano Desierto, the Ombudsman at the time, of filing a consolidated plunder case against tax credit scam suspects that was "destined for dismissal by design."

The legal maneuver, which the INQUIRER dubbed "ombudscam," involved filing a deliberately weak case: taking a dive, in a word. (Desierto vehemently denied the accusation, and eventually escaped impeachment by the House.)

The principles behind the same maneuver were seen at work again only last February, when Today newspaper exposed the machinations against principal witnesses Felix Chingkoe and his wife Rosita. Felix, the estranged brother of Faustino Chingkoe, the alleged mastermind behind the tax credit scam, found himself out of the loop; his wife Rosita faced a crueler fate: she was charged as one of the co-accused.

And now Hiansen.

The executive director of the One Stop Shop Tax Credit and Duty Drawback Center (OSS) of the Department of Finance, Hiansen was—is—both a key figure in the discovery of the scam and a leading light in the government's prosecution of the case.

In seven months last year, for instance, Hiansen helped the NBI make three key arrests and stop a new wave of tax-credit fraud (valued at some P200 million). And in May last year, he and his staff discovered that Rohm Electronics had sold P24 million in fake tax credit certificates to two other companies.

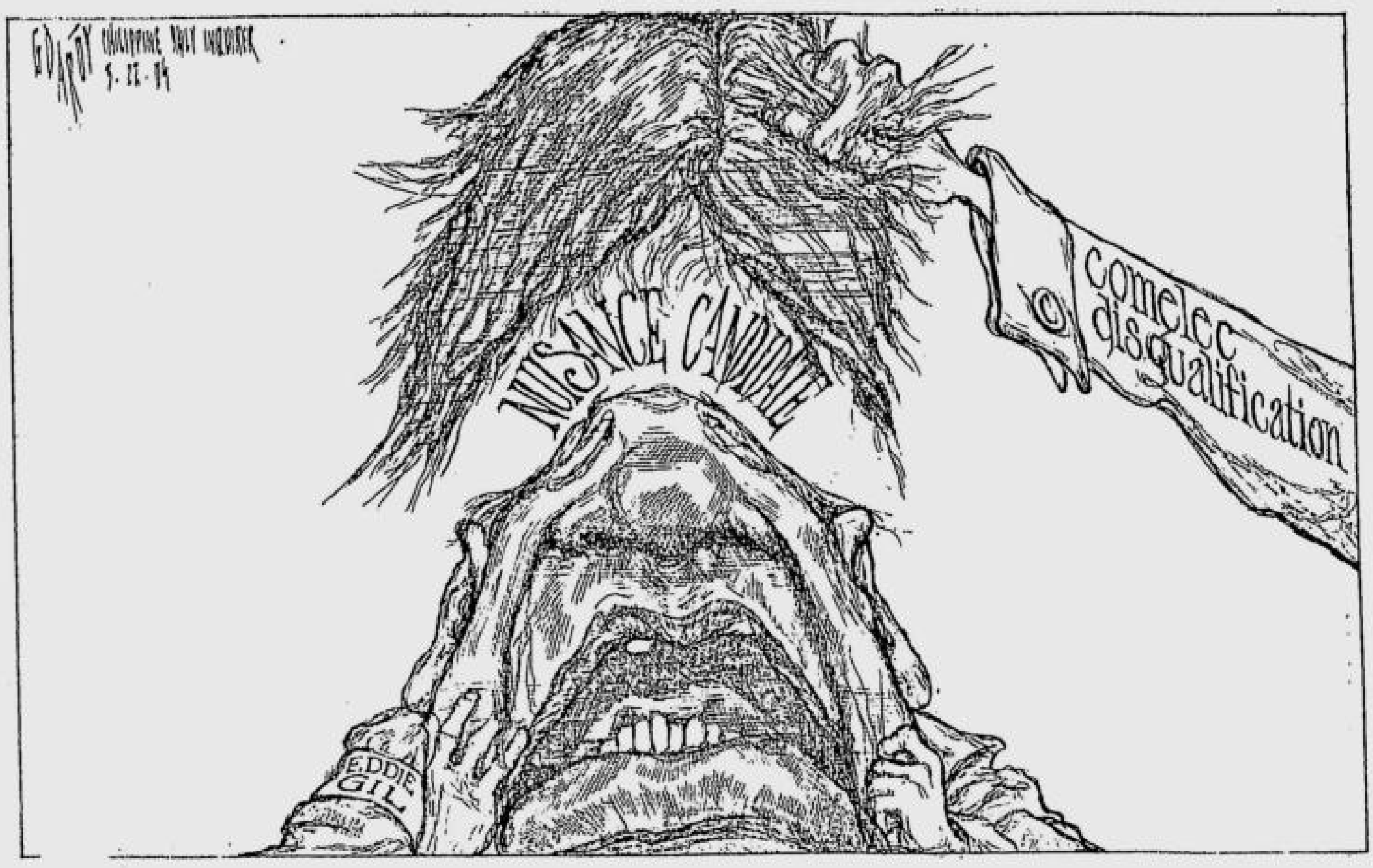
"The OSS was at the forefront of two successful entrapment operations which led to the arrest of five individuals involved in this multimillion-peso scam. It was likewise instrumental in obtaining bank documents to establish where the proceeds of this criminal activity went," Hiansen said.

So it came as a surprise, to put it mildly, when the NBI included the whistleblower in the charge sheet.

"We were the ones who discovered and exposed the (latest) scam. If we were party to it, we could just have kept quiet," he said.

The lawyers advising Task Force 156, the inter-agency group tasked to investigate tax credit anomalies, recommended that the accusation against Hiansen and his staff for negligence and gross misconduct be thrown into the waste basket. The NBI decided to file charges anyway.

It does not take a seasoned investigator to know that, since the scam was first exposed in 1995, many attempts have been made to stop the government case, or weaken it. How the NBI could have missed this pattern, or how it has come to play an inadvertent role in it, is a mystery.



Human rights violations by the BID

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

DO you know why Filipinos are being treated unfairly in other countries? Because we don't treat foreigners here fairly. There are many foreigners now languishing for years and months in detention centers of our Bureau of Immigration and Deportation (BID) without any conviction for any crime or any final order of deportation.

The BID detention centers are intended primarily for foreigners with final orders of deportation after being convicted as undesirable aliens. But many of these foreigners are detained there on the mere issuance of a "mission order" by the Commissioner of Immigration based only on an accusation of a private person. Some of them have been confined there for so long without any hearing so that they already want to be deported to their home countries but the BID refuses to deport them and continues to detain them. This is unconstitutional.

The Supreme Court has repeatedly declared in case after case that without a final order of deportation, the immigration commissioner has no power to issue a warrant of arrest against an alien. Such an act violates the due process clause of the Constitution. And it has long been settled that the "due process clause" and the "search and seizure clause" apply to an alien legally admitted into the country.

In Santos v. Commissioner of Immigration (74 SCRA 96) the Supreme Court said: "An alien may not be arrested before a final order of deportation is made and before the charges have been substantiated."

In Salazar v. Achacoso (GR 81510, March 14, 1990), the Court en banc spelled out doctrinal guidelines:

"1. Under Article III, Secion 2, of the 1987 Constitution, it is only the judges, and no other, who may issue warrants of arrest and search.

"2. The exception is in case of deportation of illegal and undesirable aliens, whom the President or the Commissioner of Immigration may order arrested, following a final order of deportation, for the purpose of deportation."

In Gatchalian v. Hon. De la Rosa (GR Nos 85122-23, 95612-13, May 31, 1991), the Court, also en banc, reiterated that "A warrant of arrest issued by the Commissioner of Immigration, to be valid, must be for the sole purpose of executing a final order of deportation. A warrant of arrest issued by the Commissioner of Immigration for purposes of investigation only is null and void for being unconstitutional."

In Neria v. Vivo (29 SCRA 701, 1969) the court, also en banc, declared:

Yet in case after case, foreigners are detained indefinitely in BID detention centers on the mere say-so of the immigration commissioner without any final order of deportation, without any hearing even, without knowing when their cases will end, despite orders from the courts to release them.

Just one example is that of one engineer Alfred Lehnert Jr., a German national married to a Filipina with a 7-year-old daughter. He has been legally living here for the last 10 years. Lehnert wrote to me from his detention cell in Bicutan to ask for help about his dire situation.

On Sept. 27, 2002, when Lehnert went to the BID office in Mandaue City to follow up papers relative to his visa, he was suddenly arrested and detained by two BID "intelligence agents." Basis for the arrest was a "mission order," not a warrant of arrest, signed by then Commissioner Andrea D. Domingo, directing the agents to "conduct verification/validation of the immigration status and activities of said foreign national and effect the immediate arrest if found to have violated the Philippine Immigration Act of 1940, as amended." Lehnert has been in detention for 17 months now. During all that time, there has not been any hearing of his case by the BID nor any justification for his continued detention. He claims there was an attempt to extort money from him and when he refused to pay, a "fabricated" letter complaint for adultery was sent to the BID with the request to arrest and deport him. This complainant cannot now be located.

On Oct. 18, 2002, the Regional Trial Court of Mandaue City granted the petition for habeas corpus filed by Lehnert and ordered his immediate release. The BID appealed to the Court of Appeals which dismissed the appeal. It filed a motion for reconsideration; dismissed again. Thus, Lehnert should have been released already. But he is still languishing in Bicutan.

Even if the case is pending in the Supreme Court, the international doctrine is that the defendant should be released on bail pending appeal. But the BID refuses to grant Lehnert bail.

What is the BID trying to prove? The person who filed the complaint against Lehnert must be very influential. But why doesn't he prove his accusation instead of hiding? Shouldn't the German Embassy be more aggressive in protecting the rights of its citizen? Why doesn't it complain to the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs? What is the Commission on Human Rights doing? And since the immigration commissioner is a presidential appointee, what is President Macapagal-Arroyo going to do about it?

Think about it: How will we feel if the same injustice is done to a Filipino in Germany?

Unique situation

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

NATURALLY Malacañang dismisses it. That is the petition filed by Boots Anson-Roa and Amina Rasul-Bernardo asking the Supreme Court to declare Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo on leave while she is campaigning and putting the Vice President in charge of the caretaker government.

"You know we have a unique situation where we have a President who is a candidate for the first time," says Ignacio Bunye. "That is something we have to adjust to. We believe (the petition) is pure harassment."

Of course, the fact that the petition comes from candidates of the opposition makes it politically motivated. Who cares? The pot is not wrong to call the kettle black, even if he draws attention to his own color. The petition has merit and I hope they—and others—pursue it doggedly.

Bunye is right, we have a unique situation: We have a President who is a candidate for the first time in the post-Edsa period. And he is right: We have no recourse but to adjust to the situation. But why should that unique situation mean that GMA may be allowed to be both candidate and President at the same time? Why should adjusting to the situation mean allowing her to ransack the public treasury to stay in power? Bunye's premise is right, his conclusion is wrong. If the unique situation demands anything, it is the opposite.

The unique situation is that GMA was shoved to power without having been elected President. The unique situation is that she became leader without having led, or even taken meaningful part in, the campaign to oust a corrupt regime. The unique situation is that she was sworn in as President because the country had precious little choice—except the radical one of "Resign All," the caretaker government before "snap elections" to be headed by Hilario Davide—she was next in line.

If that unique situation demands anything, it is that the current occupant of Malacañang more than any of her predecessors must bind herself to the laws of the land. It is that the undeserving beneficiary of the people's blood, sweat and tears must bow to the will of the people, as enshrined in the Constitution.

The logic for asking GMA to go on leave as President comes straight from the Constitution. The one commissioner who argued—successfully—for a non-renewable single term of six years was Soc Rodrigo, his logic being that it prevents an incumbent from using public resources to campaign for reelection. The resources aren't just monetary, though that alone clinches the argument. The President, as commander in chief, can order the AFP to do her bidding, even if it is election-related, such as seal off a known opposition area on grounds of security. The President as big boss can fire any department secretary or a member of his staff who does not obey her orders, even if they are election-related, such as produce ads that depict her accomplishments, real or manufactured.

The dangers at the local level aren't comparable. A governor or mayor who ransacks the public till can only ruin his community, a president who does so can ruin the nation. Rodrigo wasn't being hypothetical when he warned of the intolerableness of an incumbent president in this country seeking reelection. He had in mind Marcos' 1969 reelection bid, which was the costliest—in blood and money—in Philippine history. Marcos spared no expense to get reelected, completely literally. And succeeded in unleashing inflation of such magnitude the peso plunged to nearly double its previous rate a few months later.

The petitioners aren't asking GMA not to run. The law is clear on it: She may, she has not finished a term beyond which she may no longer run for reelection. But the law is equally clear that a president may not run as an incumbent because it is an infinitely dangerous thing. That principle should apply above all to a president gratuitously made so by people power. The law does not apply less to GMA because she exists on our sufferance, it applies **doubly** so. *Ano s'ya, sobrang sinisuwerte?*

The petition is reasonable, just and legally compelling. GMA must go on leave, if she wants to campaign for reelection.

The unique situation moreover is that we have a President who is determined to remain in power she is pulling no stops to do so. The petition in fact may not void the cases against GMA and Honeygirl de Leon and Francisco Duque for breathtakingly buying votes with our money. Someone should bring those cases beyond the Comelec to the courts, and posthaste. It is a criminal offense. It is more than a matter of justice, it is a matter of survival. We do not do this, we may be looking at the peso being turned into World War II Japanese money a few months from now. As it is, it's already taking a beating.

GMA herself says she has been governing more than campaigning during this campaign period, which is why she has conscripted all the departments to launch all those "information campaigns" at this time. Well, we already know about her capacity to tell the truth when she said she would not run. In fact, the exact opposite is true. In all the three and a half years she has been in power, she has been campaigning more than governing. She has been campaigning ahead of all the others, a plain violation of Comelec rules. Enough is enough.

The petition to force GMA to go on leave as President while campaigning is pure harassment only in that the Cory government's demand to jail the Marcoses and their cronies was pure harassment. It is pure harassment only in that GMA's own government's demand to jail Erap, if not his cronies, is pure harassment.

This country itself is in a unique situation. We can't distinguish harassment from justice, lie from truth, perfidy from right and wrong, it's time we stopped being a country, unique or otherwise.

Back to square one with Piatco

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

WAS the "bailout" of the bankrupt Maynilad Water Services by the government part of a deal with the Lopezes? It has been alleged by critics of the President that the deal was struck with the Lopezes in return for the latter's allowing Sen. Noli de Castro, one of the superstars in their stables, to join GMA as her running mate, and presumably, for the K-4 to get preferential treatment in the Lopez media network. We probably don't have the entire picture yet at the moment, but it seems there is no choice for the government but to work out an arrangement that won't jeopardize either the welfare of the consuming public or that of the taxpayer.

For instance, there are those who concede that government has to ensure the uninterrupted delivery of water, specially this summer; but they also want to know if it would be more just to the taxpayers if the administration settles for outright receivership of the bankrupt Maynilad instead of converting its P8 billion debt into a 61 percent government equity in the firm. The allegation that a political deal was struck with the Lopezes has been denied by the Palace spokesperson. But we being in the thick of the campaign season, the Maynilad move would be blown out of proportion by the Palace's critics, who are fearfully afraid of any undue advantage to GMA—unless the Palace seeks a just solution.

* * *

A Manila Standard report by Fel Maragay said that the long-running dispute over Naia 3, the new state-of-the-art airport terminal that had been mothballed due to allegations of corruption by the owners, will now be resolved "at the level of the government lawyers and the private contractors." This "lawyer-to-lawyer" settlement comes after the negotiations with a three-member Cabinet oversight committee broke down and two arbitration cases were filed by the airport owners before two world dispute organizations. *Humaba ng humaba ang kaso, pagkatapos, sa mga abogado din pala mauuwi.*

The handling of the Piatco Naia 3 case by the government is one of the blots in the Macapagal administration. As we now see, the case is back to square one, two years after the government decided to nullify the BOT contract with Piatco. In the meantime, that beautiful airport has been padlocked and presumably its facilities are deteriorating. Some media people argued two years ago that given all that had happened in Naia 3, including the fact that some high officials of this administration had given the green light to Piatco, the best thing to do was to negotiate quietly with the Chengs for rectification of terms considered onerous; we argued that after all, the Chengs seemed more than willing to talk things over quietly. The important thing was to open that airport. But sadly this administration chose to listen to wrong advice and came down on the Chengs with hammer and tongs; now the problem is more complicated than ever.

* * *

Two weeks ago, Cecile Guidote-Alvarez and I interviewed two women executives at our Sunday dzRH public service program, where we feature various efforts of citizens to alleviate poverty. Stella Guilatco and Nancy Ocampo are what are known nowadays as modern "headhunters." Their management consultancy firm, George Garrett Guilford & Associates, specializes in "executive search services." For a fee, they seek and match talents among various professionals here, with the needs of multinational firms and big Filipino and Asian companies here, such as the Gokongwei Group and San Miguel Corp., for middle and top management and in the various scientific fields.

But aside from matching individual talents and corporate needs, among the services GGG & Associates offers are socio-economic information, local commercial intelligence, introduction to prominent advisers and business houses, market information, media facts and figures and everything that would be pertinent to a successful and compatible relationship between the hired talent and the hiring company.

* * *

Guilatco, the firm's managing director, and Ocampo, its managing associate, pointed out that executive search is a young industry that began here in the late '70s. But the demand for executive search services has grown so much, and one indication is that the American Chamber of Commerce has spun off a group called American Women's Group, to attend to the search for women professionals. Guilatco, who has taken masteral studies in clinical counseling psychology from the Ateneo University, pointed out that this may be due to the fact that more and more women now assume the post of general manager.

I queried our guests on just what skills and virtues are needed by prospective applicants to successfully land high-level jobs in MNCs. These MNC jobs are coveted by our young people as they generally offer relatively better pay and perks as well as advancement opportunities than local companies do. The lady execs replied that it helps very much if one comes from the top schools such as Ateneo, De La Salle and UP. But ultimately, they said, what matters is what one does with one's self—how he develops integrity, good work habits such as teamwork, strong ethics, persistence and industriousness. I agree. Graduating from a top school helps open doors, but how one performs in the workplace is up to the professional, and the habits and virtues he has acquired will give him the vital edge.

* * *

April marks a big event in the life of Jaime Cardinal Sin, the ailing former Archbishop of Manila. Cardinal Sin will celebrate the 50th anniversary of his ordination as a priest on April 3, with a Mass at 9 a.m. at the Manila Cathedral. Inasmuch as the former prelate of Manila is ill, it would be a wonderful gesture if all his friends and admirers could attend this Mass and be with him on that day as a form of moral support and to pray to Heaven for his health.

Malaysia and the Mindanao peace process

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Carlos Isagani T. Zarate

"LOOK at the region—if the Philippines or the parties were looking for a mediator, who could it be? Indochina was out because of the Philcag role there. Indonesia was in no position with its internal problems. Singapore has no credibility with Islamic groups. Brunei is a non-player. Thailand has its own Muslim separatist problem. It's almost a role cut out for Malaysia," Malaysian academic, Khoo Boo Teik, said in June 2001 during an interview by peace advocate and legal scholar Soliman Santos.

Khoo Boo Teik's comments were included in Santos' revised treatise on the role of Malaysia as mediator in the on and off peace negotiations between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. Though expressed almost two years ago, the Malaysian academic's statements still aptly portrayed the closely linked yet dichotomized interests of the Philippines and Malaysia, which, since 2001, already played host to the GRP-MILF peace panels. With Malaysia's active role, issues like the Sabah claim—a long-time thorn in Philippine-Malaysia relations—is temporarily taking a backseat.

Interestingly, both countries are presently in the thick of elections.

Malaysia's ruling party Umno now under the leadership of Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Dr. Mohamad Mahathir's successor, is facing strong challenges from the main Islamic opposition party, Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS), and others like the one headed by the wife of jailed former Deputy Minister Anwar Ibrahim.

Back at home, the Macapagal administration is similarly facing neck-and-neck challenges in an election where issues like competence in governance, peace and order, corruption, cronyism, poverty, economy and sovereignty, among others, are giving way to a pure popularity contest and hype.

Although, Malaysia may be less likely to suffer the so-called "Spanish Syndrome" because of its strong stand against the US-led "coalition of the willing," it cannot be discounted that the Philippines is in the target-range for terroristic attacks, especially during the election period.

Despite the optimistic assurances, the present administration cannot be too assured that it will not suffer the fate of outgoing Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar, who, like President Macapagal-Arroyo, was an early zealous backer of the US-led Iraq invasion.

Yet, whatever may be the results of the two elections, their outcome will have some effect in the course of the talks for peace in Mindanao and in the bilateral relations of the two countries. In his treatise, Santos cited several sources who concluded that a "peaceful solution" to the MILF rebellion is not only in the best interest of the Philippines but more so for Malaysia. In several pronouncements with reference to the GRP-MILF peace talks, Malaysian officials are one in saying that the problem in Mindanao "has become part of our national interest."

Economic and security concerns like the influx of Filipino refugees (both economic ones and those displaced by war) in Sabah, the terror activities of the Abu Sayyaf and the fight against globalization are among the common reasons cited why Malaysia is keen on achieving a comprehensive resolution to the peace talks.

Beyond these concerns, Santos curiously observed that the Philippine claim on Sabah has been muted. But before he died, MILF Chair Hashim Salamat, "among the key players in the tripartite equation," had candidly said that "Malaysia is hoping that if she could play (an) important role in ending the conflict between the warring nations, the Sabah claim may be dropped or delayed indefinitely."

"Sabah is an important factor in the Mindanao conflict and peace process if only because of geographical (aside from historical) proximity," Santos said. "Mindanao is so near Sabah, any war in Mindanao will result in the influx of refugees and the social problems they bring to Sabah. But aside from such external inroads, there are also internal dynamics involved. One Malaysian academic points to the need to understand the politics of Sabah, as the only state with a rotation of ruling parties. Since most of the refugees are Muslims, their influx may be disadvantageous to the non-Muslim political parties. As it is, already about one-third of the population in Sabah are Filipino descendants.

"And so there is a demographic (aside from geographic) dimension involved," Santos noted.

These internal dynamics are also at play in the rest of Malaysia. Being predominantly Muslim, there is a natural concern in Malaysia for the Moro Muslims in the Philippines.

The ruling party Umno, Santos said, must show that it is helping the Muslim Filipinos, especially since it has "lost significant votes" to PAS in recent elections.

As to the timing of the Malaysian "mediation," Santos noted that the Sipadan hostage crisis and the Philippine government's "all-out wars" became the "catalysts or wake-up calls." "With the former, there was some fear about things getting out of hand. With the latter, it was better for the Malaysian government to take the initiative before the conflict goes beyond control."

* * *

IBP NOTES: The IBP-Davao City Chapter is sponsoring a two-day Mandatory Continuing Legal Education seminar on March 29 and 30 at the Davao Trade and Convention Center. Interested parties may get in touch with the IBP-Davao Office at Tel. Nos. (082)296-00-70 and 299-07-53.

* * *

Comments at karlos_z23@hotmail.com and kar_laws@yahoo.com

Daring and consensus

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

THE OTHER night I watched "The Madness of King George," and something one of the characters said struck me as relevant to the Poe campaign. In the film, Dr. Willis, the character tasked with restoring the sanity of the king muses, "Who's to say what's normal in a King? Deferred to, agreed with, acquiesced in. Who can flourish with such a daily diet of compliance? To be curbed, stood up to—in a word, thwarted—exercises the character, plasticates the spirit, makes it more pliant. It's the want of such exercise that makes rulers rigid." To my mind, it is the rigidity in the character of Fernando Poe Jr., that is the greatest weakness in his campaign. The stiff, unbending nature of his personality prevents two essential attributes of leadership from emerging: daring and consensus.

The two acts of daring of Poe are his having decided to run for office, and his having selected Sen. Loren Legarda as his running mate. In the first case, his decision to run, he did try to achieve some sort of consensus by consulting different sectors; but that act of daring was a personal one. The way he managed, or perhaps its more accurate to say, mismanaged, the selection of his running mate, and then of his senatorial slate, showed, however, his deficiencies when it comes to achieving a political consensus. He caused antagonism within his camp at the very start, first by taking in Legarda, and then by, at first, declining to have Jinggoy Estrada in his senatorial slate. The result was that precious time was wasted putting out fires within his own territory when he should have started his campaign with a big bang. Legarda's entry raised the hackles of the Edsa Tres crowd; the non-selection, and then the eventual selection, of Jinggoy Estrada further antagonized his more radical supporters and fostered the suspicion among those in his camp who are not rabid Estrada loyalists, that Poe couldn't stand up to the former president.

Then came two other problems. The first was Poe's decision not to participate in a presidential debate, and the second is his apparent refusal to wage a campaign on anything but his own terms. His non-participation in a debate points to his lack of daring; his insistence on running his campaign the way he wants to, instead of the way some of his backers and operatives with vast political experience want, indicates a certain inflexibility that gets in the way of achieving consensus. These factors are eroding his standing before his greatest constituency, the masses.

After all, the masses do not expect him to be smart, to be cunning, to be wise: they love him precisely because he is none of these things. But they do expect him to be daring. And they do expect him to be a unifying force in our national life. Poe himself has presented himself as a person who has dared to enter the presidential race because he wants to achieve unity. But after the initial impact of his announcing he would run, he has provided his fans with disappointment after disappointment.

There are points in a campaign when the candidate has to dare to be different; to gamble, or at least give the appearance of gambling, to the extent that his opponents must either raise the ante or fold. Recklessness in this country is more of a political asset than playing it safe. Poe's campaign was initially presented as a great gamble: here was a man who dared to go against tradition, against the machine. His backers thought that their getting the most renowned actor in Philippine cinema to enter politics would spark a revolution, of sorts. A populist uprising that would create an irresistible bandwagon.

The bandwagon, however, has proven a carabao cart: creaky, unsteady and painfully slow. Fundamentally, Poe has proven himself not the kind of gambler who excites admiration for his daring, but instead, the kind who believes in winning because the deck has been stacked in his favor. When there are any variables, he retreats, because the odds aren't entirely in his favor. This is not the Filipino idea of leadership, nor is it what his supporters expected from the country's No. 1 macho man: after all, his primary opponent is a woman, accused of incarnating many of womanhood's supposed weaknesses. Yet the President, for one, has proven the more daring gambler, and the more competent at creating some sort of consensus.

There are, surely, meetings going on among the Poe operatives to try to convince their candidate to try to control his environment less. He must do riskier things, they are probably telling him. And they are probably attempting to convince him to try to undertake acts with enough impact to convince his constituency that he's capable of cracking the whip and keeping the professional politicians under his thumb. Or maybe again, they're not: for Poe's lack of daring and his shortcomings when it comes to consensus building are the result of his innate conservatism (both political and social) and his great pride. In a word, his rigidity: both as a man with rightist instincts, and who has an authoritarian show-biz style. The irony of this campaign may be that in so zealously trying to protect the image that made him what he is, he is unmaking himself as a presidential candidate.

* * *

Comments welcome at www.quezon.ph

Media manipulation during the campaign

READERS' ADVOCATE

Raul J. Palabrica

AS the campaign for the May 10 elections slowly winds down, the candidates for national positions are scrounging for every opportunity to be written or talked about by the media.

For those candidates who rate low on poll surveys, no request to be interviewed by reporters or broadcasters is too minor to be ignored. Some wannabes would gladly give an arm and a leg to see their photos on the front page of major newspapers or hear their names mentioned on prime time radio and TV news programs.

Desperate for publicity, many of these aspirants make shocking statements or accusations that they think would make media persons sit up and listen. And often they succeed in their ploy.

This mode of publicity solicitation did not escape the attention of reader Enrique Labayen, a regular writer to this column. Exasperated by the mudslinging going on, he wrote: "Is it possible for newspapers not to give space to allegations and counter-allegations among rival politicians if they are unsubstantiated?

"The present practice is to publish an accusation by one camp and get the side of the other which results in verbal tussles that do not arrive at the truth. We are left hanging after new issues come up. I observed that all these accusations are merely intended to land in the news.

"If the lies they peddle against each other don't get media mileage, maybe they will refrain from doing so. If only legitimate issues are covered, the press can greatly contribute to the political maturity of our citizens.

"Probably, the question that should be asked is: Is an unsubstantiated claim or accusation considered news or plain rumormongering? If you publish a mere rumor, what does that say of your newspaper?

Mudslinging

"I hear complaints from the media about how politics in this country have gone to the dogs due to mudslinging but the same media seem just too happy to provide the forum. This makes you appear as hypocrites because you always put the blame on the *trapos* the failure to raise the level of politics, then you make yourself look good by castigating them for the way they behave."

Wow! That indictment was really strong. It didn't surprise me though. For too long, I have been receiving complaints about the print media, the INQUIRER included, exaggerating otherwise innocuous statements or harmless incidents to provoke sharp reaction from those adversely affected by the adverse news.

The exchange of words often results in eye-catching headlines and intrigue-laden reports that never fail to attract the readers' attention. In the process, newspaper sales go up.

The fears expressed by the reader about the media being exploited by politicians to boost their candidacies is not lost on the INQUIRER's editorial staff. It is something that the newspaper is wary about every election year.

The telltale signs of that activity become evident months before the elections. When politicians start becoming chummy with reporters and editors or PR practitioners who have not been heard from for ages suddenly surface to personally submit press releases about their clients, the stage is slowly being set for the possible manipulation of media during the campaign period.

If the walls of the editorial room can speak, they can say a mouthful about the reporters' and editors' impressions about these scheming politicians. Miss Manners might go into a violent fit.

Reminder

When asked to comment on the reader's complaint, the editor in chief said she has given instructions to the editorial staff to be careful about reporting on black propaganda during the campaign period.

Unless substantiated and documented, the charges and innuendoes hurled by candidates against each other are not to be covered and reported on. Otherwise, throughout the campaign period, the newspaper will have on its hands an endless cycle of stories on charges and counter-charges by politicians fixated on maximizing media exposure. The INQUIRER has no intention of allowing itself to be used as the personal battleground of rival politicians.

Corollary to this caveat, the editor in chief reiterated the rules on reporting on the personal lives of the candidates. She said personal facts about a candidate are best kept away from the public unless they are newsworthy. For instance, if a girlfriend or boyfriend of a candidate shows up during the latter's campaign in a remote barrio, that is not news. But it is news if she or he arrives in a military helicopter or government-owned vehicle attended to by military security assigned to the candidate.

In fine, the principle behind the guidelines that have been laid down for the reporters and editors in the coverage of the campaign leading to the May 10 elections is: let no candidate running for the highest as well as the lowest office feel that he or she has been unfairly treated by the INQUIRER.

Expectations

I think the standards set by the editor in chief call for a delicate balancing act by the reporters and editors assigned to keep tabs and report on the activities of the major national candidates.

Considering the manipulative and deceptive ways of many of our politicians, it is not easy to determine, under pressure of editorial deadlines, if imputations of illegal or immoral acts made by one candidate against another are true or are fabrications that are meant to attract public attention only.

The existence of "supporting documents" does not guarantee the truth or veracity of the information that they contain. Sworn statements are easy to prepare. There is no dearth of notaries public who will attest to the voluntary signature of alleged witnesses to unlawful acts.

At the end of the day, the reporter or editor concerned will have to make a judgment call on whether or not a charge or innuendo made in the course of the campaign is something the public should know or is mere propaganda that should enter one ear and out the other.

Errors or lapses in judgment in reporting campaign news cannot be avoided. Experienced or veteran reporters and editors are not exempt from sometimes being taken for a ride by astute politicians and their handlers. In politics, everything, including friendship built through the years, takes a backseat to ambition and desire for political power.

I'm keeping my fingers crossed that after May 10 no candidate can honestly point a finger to the INQUIRER and accuse it of being less than fair in its coverage of the election campaign.

* * *

The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City. Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

An uncompleted bridge too far

NO physician in his right mind would want to kill a patient. In fact, the physician, reinforced by the Hippocratic Oath and swearing by it, says thus: "I will use my power to help the sick to the best of my ability and judgment; I will abstain from harming or wronging any man by it..."

But a good hospital bordering Manila and Mandaluyong City is slowly but surely being "killed." For one year now, Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital is, step by step, and by slow intensifying degrees, "dying." Its patients are relentlessly dwindling; its doctors, nurses and other health personnel are resigning and leaving because of demoralization and financial hardships. All because of the unfinished bridge that spans the river between Sta. Mesa, Manila and Mandaluyong City—the Sevilla Bridge.

The administrators of Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, with some regularity and expecting kindness from the powers-that-be, have called up, written and visited their offices, requesting that work on the bridge be resumed and finished as soon as possible. But there has only been silence. There were no answers. Some officials said the budget for its repair was not enough. Others in government suggested consultations with the Department of Public Works and Highways or the engineering department of the City of Manila, or Mandaluyong City. These were done. Malacañang was also consulted. There were no answers. What was forthcoming was the theory that this bridge repair project is now caught up in the now raging political crossfire, or the familiar game of finger-pointing, which according to a well-known Filipino cultural anthropologist from the University of the Philippines, is a common cultural chink in our people.

To the people in government, this bridge reconstruction may be a small matter, but to the residents in the catchment area of this hospital such as Sta. Mesa, Sampaloc, Santa Ana, parts of Quezon City, San Juan, Mandaluyong City, parts of Makati City and of Pasig City and the towns of Eastern Rizal Province even up to Antipolo City, they do not have to take traffic-crowded circuitous routes to reach their trusted and reliable hospital.

To the responsible authorities, shall we wait until after the elections for this small bridge to be finished? Is it therefore, politicking of the most despicable type again, or petty tyranny at its worst being sadly inflicted on this hapless hospital by whoever is in charge of this project? May this not be so!

Otherwise, some of the revered co-founders and pioneers of the hospital like Dr. Basilio J. Valdes and Sister Ingoberga of the Servants of the Holy Spirit might become restless and turn in their graves. All because the hospital they founded is almost *"in extremis."*

—JOSE M. PUJALTE, M.D.,
chair, Department of Surgery,
Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital,
Sta. Mesa, Manila

LETTERS
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Brandy ad also riles schools

I FULLY support Ceres Doyo's opinion in her "Kinse Anyos" column. (PDI, 3/11/04) I too, have wondered if no public official has seen these types of advertisements which indeed evoke a different meaning that can cause real harm to some sectors in our society. I now wish to share with you my own views regarding this matter, as a teacher of marketing:

The current issue surrounding Destileria Limtuaco's ad on its product regarding the tag line, "Nakatikim ka na ba ng 15 anyos?" is indeed something that should alarm business groups and business schools, especially at this point wherein corporate social responsibility is gaining paramount importance.

The company's ad is truly unacceptable as it connotes a meaning that demeans children and women. Even in my own class, I asked my students what comes to mind when they hear the tag line, and indeed, they answered that the tag line seems to refer to a 15-year-old female.

Marketing is not just about the product, the place, the price and promotion. It is also about responsibility. Philip Kotler, recognized as the Father of Modern Marketing, has espoused societal marketing which calls upon "marketers to build social and ethical considerations into their marketing practices."

Destileria Limtuaco must heed the call of the Ad Board and the women's groups complaining about the ad. They are not the only groups complaining. We, too, here in our school are alarmed by this ad.

—MICHAEL S. YANGA,
vice president for finance,
Dr. Yanga's Colleges Inc.,
MacArthur Highway,
Wakas, Bocaue, Bulacan

MGB clarification on status of mines

ALLOW us to clarify some of the issues raised by lawyer Reynaldo P. Mendoza, vice president and assistant corporate secretary of Benguet Corp., in his response to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources press release on the rehabilitation of abandoned or inactive mines. ("BenguetCorp mines not abandoned or neglected," PDI, 3/10/04)

The DENR press release was based on the results of the Environmental Assessment of Abandoned/Inactive Mines in the Philippines conducted by Tetra Tech EM Inc., which was commissioned by the DENR-Mines and Geosciences Bureau in 2000. The study was able to provide a semi-detailed assessment of abandoned mines (including orphaned sites or idle mining assets) or inactive mines in the country. It will serve as reference for the rehabilitation and remediation efforts that the government will undertake under Executive Order 270 (National Policy Agenda on Revitalizing Mining in the Philippines).

BenguetCorp.'s Antamok Gold Operations (Antamok, Itogon, Benguet), Masinloc Chromite Mines (Masinloc, Zambales) and the Acupan Mines (Acupan, Itogon, Benguet) fall within the category of inactive mines because their operations were temporarily closed during the time of the study. Prior to the 2000 Tetra Tech study, Masinloc mine had no production in 1999 while the Acupan mine's last production was in 1998. The Acupan mine resumed operations in November 2001 through the service-contract scheme with small-scale miners. The Masinloc mine resumed operations in 2000.

Today, the Acupan and Masinloc mines are still operating.

By definition, inactive mines are mines or mineral processing sites that are temporarily closed for a variety of reasons such as technical, economic, environmental or social and which have reasonable possibilities of being reopened in the future.

The government recognizes that inactive mines are very different from abandoned mines and we have been careful in the use of these technical terms so as not to confuse the public. Abandoned mines are those where rehabilitation is incomplete but whose legal owners still exist. Orphaned sites, on the other hand, refer to abandoned mines for which the responsible party no longer exists or cannot be located while idle mining assets refer to 'abandoned mines that are currently under the Privatization Management Office of the Office of the President (formerly the Asset Privatization Office).

—EDWIN G. DOMINGO,
OIC-director,
Mines and Geosciences Bureau-Central Office,
North Avenue,
Diliman, Quezon City

Gubat mayor contests inaccurate branding

AS incumbent mayor of Gubat, Sorsogon, I would like to take exception to the news item in the Second Front page last Jan. 11 naming Gubat as one of the hottest spots in the entire country this coming elections, as well as an INQUIRER editorial citing an incident involving reelectionist Rep. Jose G. Solis and his supporters as victims of violence. (PDI, 3/12/04) Solis was not ambushed but harassed by the New People's Army as claimed by the spokesperson of the Romulo Jallores Command. In fact, three firearms were taken from the car of Solis.

The sources for the editorial and news item were not reliable for accuracy or balance. I checked with Col. Romeo Cabatic, the Army battalion commander in Sorsogon; the operations officer of the provincial PNP command as well as the Office of the Provincial Comelec Supervisor if they made the report naming Gubat as one of the hottest spots in the forthcoming elections. All of them denied making such a report.

This is my fourth term as mayor and since 1988, I have not required any security in my visits to barangays or any election-related violence during the four electoral contests I have gone through. The news item and editorial did not do justice to the people of Gubat, who are peace-loving and God-fearing and do not resort to violence to attain political goals.

The Butanding season in Donsol, Sorsogon has begun and a good number of visitors from all over the country go as far as Rizal Beach in Gubat in the months of March to June. In June this year, some 150 of our fellow Gubatnons from all over the United States are scheduled to come home for our Balik-Gubat 2004. The news that Gubat has been branded as one of the "hottest spots" in all of Luzon might give them cause to cancel their homecoming, disappointing relatives and the people of Gubat who are eagerly waiting for this event.

—DEOGRACIAS B. RAMOS JR.,
mayor, Gubat, Sorsogon

FIRST of all, I am sorry about Mayor Deogracias B. Ramos Jr.'s feeling aggrieved about allegations made about his town and I understand his genuine concern for it. However, I wonder if he has really read my report. It seems that he added words and data to it. In the first place, I never used the word "ambush" in the story, since ambush refers to an attack against a moving unit, person or group of persons. The word I used was "attack" on Rep. Jose Solis' group. Please be informed also that it was Solis, his staff, Sorsogon police chief Senior Supt. Arne de los Santos and 901st Infantry Brigade commander Col. Ramon Santos who were my sources of information through interviews I had with them.

The branding of Gubat as one of the hottest spots in Luzon cannot be found in my article. Instead I said, "Comelec Bicol director Zacarias Zaragoza refused to identify the incident as election-related. He said the incident had to be investigated if it was initiated by the congressman's political opponents."

—RONNIE LOREJO,
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Who would not be angry?

I AGREE 100 percent with Conrado de Quiros. Who would not be angry seeing how so much of our taxes go to the pockets of crooks when there's so much poverty and misery around us? I have never bought the line that the Philippines is a poor nation. If it were, how come there are so many scrambling to be elected and/or appointed to public office for the principal purpose of lining their pockets and living the good life?

I have witnessed first hand how much those with money spend for just one party with nary a thought that for merely P150 or so a year, the tuition of a pupil in a public school can be paid up. I have seen how for P50, a family can eat for a day with a small platter of pancit. I have seen youths who, instead of being in school, are busy learning the rudiments of pickpocketing in the streets, later on to graduate to more serious crimes such as drug pushing.

How long can we be indifferent? What kind of values are we teaching our children? Has it ever occurred to those engaged in corruption that they are slowly but surely darkening the world that their children and grandchildren will live in in the future? That they are destroying the country as sure as foreign invaders in the past did?

—TERESA GERONIMO,
Barangay San Roque,
Marikina City

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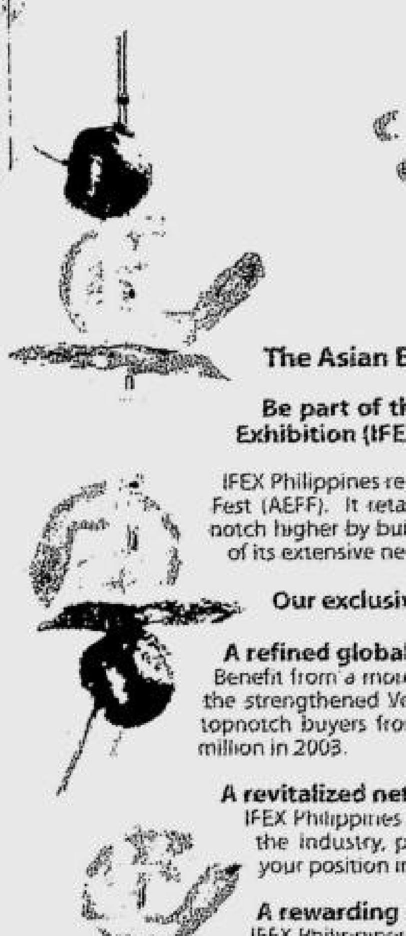

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Suspension of GSIS loan privilege in ARMM lifted

COTABATO CITY—Some 10,000 public schoolteachers in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao can now avail themselves again of Government Service Insurance System services.

On Thursday, Gov. Parouk Hussin signed a memorandum of agreement between GSIS president and CEO Winston Garcia lifting the suspension of the loan privileges of ARMM teachers.

"A fund has been released to settle DepEd's obligation with the GSIS," said Hussin, who is concurrently the regional secretary of the Department of Education.

"The President has directed GSIS to address the problem head-on and we have the solution," Hussin said without elaborating where the amount came from and what will happen to the budget intended for GSIS since 1997.

Apparently, the Macapagal administration saw the need to address the problem as quickly as possible because of its possible implications in the coming elections, said a schoolteacher upon learning of the "development."

The lifting came after the publication of news reports about GSIS' suspension of loan benefits to ARMM teachers because of the failure of ARMM's Department of Education to remit GSIS premiums and contributions.

As of Friday, DepEd-ARMM owed GSIS some P980,000 in employees and government shares in the state funding institution, according to Judith Gozo, GSIS Cotabato branch manager.

"All these amounts should have been remitted on time in GSIS' branches in Cotabato, Zamboanga and Iligan City," she said.

But Hussin, said, "the problem has been settled."

Without naming names, Hussin blamed his predecessors for the DepEd mess. DepEd's obligations to GSIS started to pile up in 1997, according to GSIS Cotabato.

The unremitted amount has ballooned to P894,836. Of this amount, P510,062 are for premiums and the rest for interest.

Last week, the Regional Legislative Assembly (RLA), ARMM's law-making body, conducted an inquiry "in aid of legislation" on the teachers' complaints.

Led by Maguindanao Schools Division Superintendent Udtog Kawit, some 4,000 teachers in Maguindanao trooped to the RLA to air their grievances.

But lawyer Arnel Datukon, counsel for Maguindanao teachers, claimed that the inquiry could not solve the problem. He explained that whatever solution it could come up with would only be temporary and the problem remains that the teachers' share to the GSIS, collected automatically, have not been remitted to GSIS.

"Where does the money go?" Datukon quoted the teachers as asking themselves.

Hussin, interviewed over Radio Station dxMS, did not offer answers. He, however, admitted that hundreds of applicants, including those leading the teachers' protests, are eyeing the position of regional secretary.

"This is a very juicy post, many are interested," he said. "The present set-up stays."

The set-up he was referring to is that he acts as regional secretary. But he named an officer-in-charge, Dr. Leovigilda Cinchez, DepEd ARMM's director for finance and liaison to the Department of Budget and Management. *Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Mayor hits town's inclusion in police list of hot spots

GUBAT, Sorsogon—The mayor of this town has denounced its inclusion in the police's list of hot spots and accused Sorsogon Rep. Jose Solis (Lakas-CMD) of "political machination designed to embarrass the local government unit."

Mayor Deogracias Ramos, a reelectionist under the NPC-Lakas-LP banner, said there was no incident to justify the declaration of the town as a hot spot.

He said Solis lied when he reported that he was ambushed in Barangay Union here in January.

He claimed that the incident was "stage-managed" by Solis' men. "He was not ambushed, that's a lie," he said.

He was referring to the report about Solis and his two drivers who were attacked by 10 unidentified men while the congressman was about to speak at a turnover ceremony for a road project in the village.

"Maybe he wanted to militarize Gubat, but we will not cheat him here. This is my 14th year as a mayor and I never cheated or used private armies in the elections," an agitated Ramos told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

The INQUIRER tried to contact Solis several times but he could not be reached.

Philippine National Police operations chief Director Avelino Razon Jr. said PNP has recorded 42 incidents of poll violence and tagged more than 500 areas around the country, including Gubat, as potential sources of trouble.

In February, he said the municipal board had sent a resolution to the Commission on Elections, PNP Chief Hermogenes Ebdane and Armed Forces Chief of Staff Narciso Abaya, "strongly denouncing the inclusion of Gubat as a hot spot."

"The Mayor of Castilla was fired upon in an ambush, why did they not declare Castilla as hot spot?" Ramos said referring to the ambush of Castilla Mayor Renato Laurenaria on Monday. *Emir Emano Gamis, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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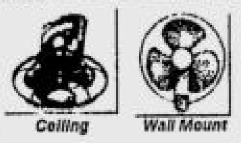

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Yazaki-Torres Manufacturing, Incorporated

Message

I congratulate the officers and staff of Yazaki-Torres Manufacturing, Inc. as they celebrate their 30th Founding Anniversary.

I laud this organization for being one with the Administration in our efforts to uplift the lives of the Filipino people. Your unwavering commitment in bringing about employment and generating income for our fellowmen is commendable.

I am looking forward to more years of our continued partnership in implementing reforms and reconciliation in our society in order to bring the economy back on the right track and heal the wounds of divisiveness among us. May this event inspire you to be one with the government in aiming for unification and reconciliation that in turn will lead us to a more peaceful and progressive nation.

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

Gloria Arroyo
Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
President
Republic of the Philippines

Our warmest greetings to the management and staff of Yazaki -Torres Manufacturing, Inc. (YTMI) as you celebrate your 30th Founding Anniversary on March 22, 2004.

Thirty years of excellence marks Yazaki - Torres Manufacturing, Inc.'s position in the global automotive market as one on the major suppliers of automotive wiring harness. A leader in the domestic automotive parts and components industry in terms of export performance, manufacturing operations, quality-and productivity-enhancement practices, and industrial peace advocacy, YTMI is indeed a showcase among joint venture firms. In all stages of transitional changes and development whether at the regional, national or global level, the company has maintained its leadership in the domestic industry. YTMI's credibility as a manufacturer-exporter, supplier and employer is widely recognized even without mention of the numerous distinctions the company has earned through the years.

On the occasion of its third decade of operations, we congratulate YTMI and wish the company continued success in all its edeavors. The DTI commends the company for its accomplishments and its 30 years of fruitful partnership with the government and substantial contributions to Philippine socio-economic and industrial development and progress. Together with the local automotive parts and components manufacturing industry, we celebrate this significant milestone with YTMI.

Mabuhay!

Cesar Purisima
DTI Secretary

This year we celebrate the 30th Anniversary of Yazaki-Torres Manufacturing, Inc., a joint venture established in September 1973 with Mr. Feliciano L. Torres. For the enduring and remarkable success of this company we have the Philippine national and local governments and our customers to thank for their unfailing support, and of course President Torres himself and all the employees of Yazaki-Torres Manufacturing for their constant effort.

When I think of Yazaki-Torres Manufacturing the image of a ship comes immediately to my mind, anchored in the home port of the Philippines with Captain Torres and his crew of employees. Built upon the foundation of the Philippine nation, culture and character, the Great ship Yazaki-Torres sails the vast seas of the global auto industry with Captain Torres at the helm.

Since embarking on this wondrous voyage thirty years ago, the Great Ship Yazaki-Torres has kept it sights fixed on being number one in quality, cost and delivery (QCD) the world over. Whether the winds of the economy blow fair or foul, I know that captain and crew face the seas ahead united.

I pray that President Arroyo, Captain of the Philippine Ship of State, our customers and everyone associated with the Great Ship Yazaki-Torres will forever stay the course with us on this magnificent voyage.

Yasuhiko Yazaki
Chairman of the Board

First of all, I thank God, the Almighty Father for the guidance and inspiration in the 30 years of our uninterrupted operations.

Looking back three decades after, there s truly so much to be thankful for. The company was blessed to have surpassed the many economic and political crises the country have had for the past 30 years. The company owed much of its success to its main asset – the employees. Our tested unity and our employees unqualified dedication greatly helped to patiently hurdle the barriers and the corporate challenges we encountered along the way. We are lucky that our operations have posted eleven expansions in the light of economic uncertainties and we are happy that we have contributed in creating jobs. We consider the last two years bannering, as we have established two new satellite plants; Yazaki-Torres Parts Mfg., Inc. in YTMI-Realty Special Economic Zone and YTP-LIMA Mfg., Inc. in LIMA Technology Center.

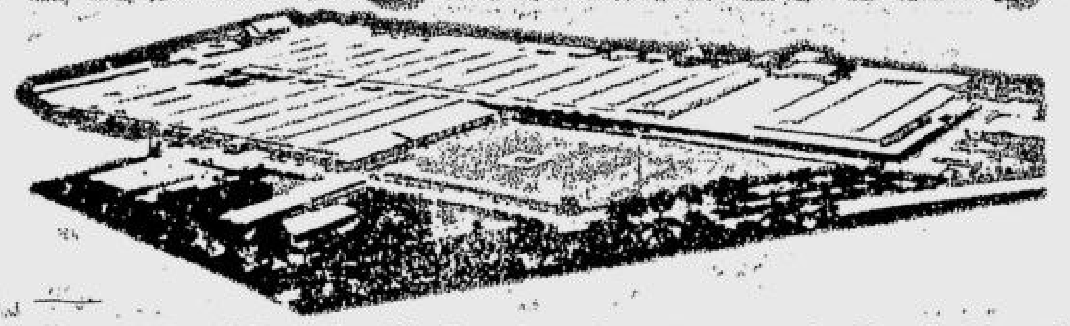
We take this opportunity to express our sincerest thanks to those who contributed to the success of our operation; to our customers for their continuing confidence in us and the challenge they have presented that made us more innovative, to the different government agencies most especially the Board of Investments and Philippine Economic Zone Authority for the varied assistance and support necessary to make our operation competitive in the global market, to our ever supportive suppliers and most especially to our neighboring communities whose cooperation and support is invaluable. The company is likewise thankful for the unfailing trust of Yazaki Corporation, led by the Chairman, Mr. Yasuhiko Yazaki and President, Mr. Shinji Yazaki.

Thirty years and looking beyond, we aspire to strengthen more our relationships to our stakeholders as we see this paramount for a shared success.

Again, we thank everyone.

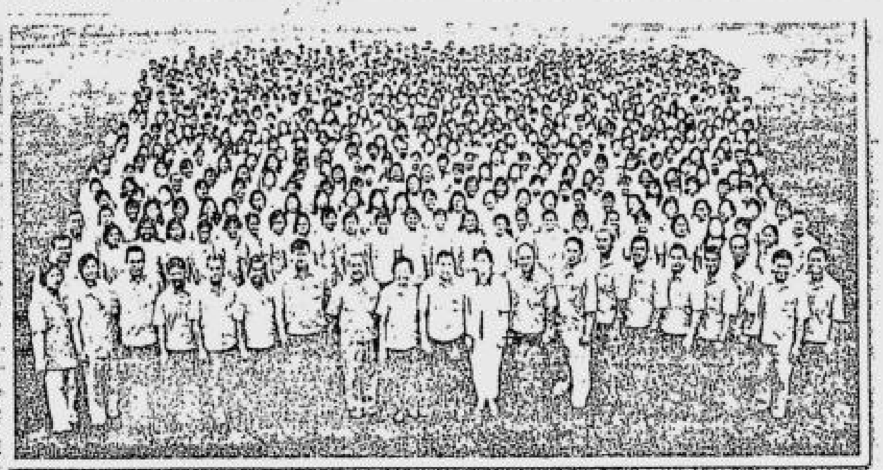
Feliciano L. Torres
President and General Manager

"Celebrates Its 30th Founding Anniversary"



"30 Years Working in Unity for Customer's Satisfaction"

ONE FOR ALL
ALL FOR ONE



(The photo of the supervisors up to the President of Yazaki-Torres who leads the 8,500 -strong workforce)

Mr. Feliciano L. Torres
President and
General Manager

VISION

To be the Model "Preferred Supplier" of Automotive Wiring Harnesses within the Yazaki group

MISSION

Our mission is to be the leader in producing automotive wiring harnesses of the greatest value to our customers worldwide through the utilization of quality minded employees schooled in the Company's Guiding Principles.

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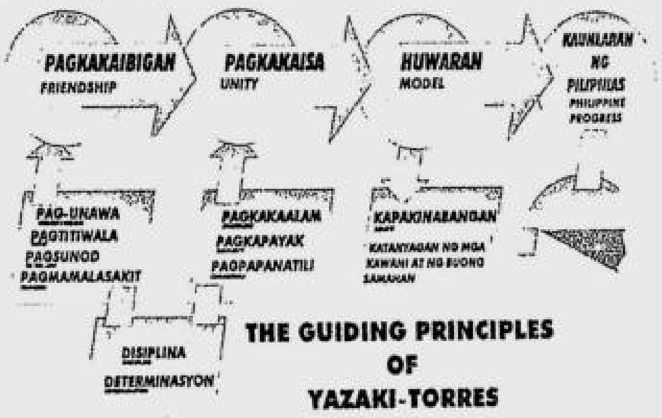
GUIDING PRINCIPLES



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- 1997 BOI Investor Award for Best Employer – from BOI
- 1998, 1999 and 2002 Presidential Outstanding Healthy Workplace Award from the President of the Philippines
- 1998 Presidential Philippine Quality Award from the President of the Philippines
- 2001 Grand Kapatid Awards, Highest Category from ECOP
- Outstanding Supplier Awards from Philippine-based firms: Toyota, Honda, Mitsubishi, Nissan and Isuzu
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Mr. Feliciano L. Torres, President and General Manager receiving The Grand Kapatid Award from Her Excellency President Macapagal Arroyo

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Church suspends priest running for mayoral post

SAN PASCUAL, Batangas—The Catholic Church has suspended a priest who has been serving the government for about six years and who has even joined the mayoral race in this town.

A notice from the Chancery of the Archdiocese of Lipa suspended from the priestly ministry Rev. Fr. Librado Dimaunahan, along with another priest, Rev. Fr. Generoso Sacdalan.

Dimaunahan had been working for the provincial government since 1998. He was the administrator of the Lipa City Public College and acting Community Affairs Officer in 1999.

Known in Lipa as Father Levi, Dimaunahan was Mayor Vilma Santos-Recto's city administrator from 2000 to 2003.

On Jan. 5, he filed his certificate of candidacy for the mayoral post of San Pascual town, with the Commission on Elections under the ruling Lakas-CMD party.

Dimaunahan said he was glad the suspension order was out. It "would erase doubts that I'll be using the church in the campaign," he said.

The suspension order, signed by Msgr. Jose Salazar, the archdiocesan administrator of Lipa, and Fr. Gerard Jonas Palmares, Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Lipa, took effect on March 2 for Dimaunahan and Feb. 27 for Sacdalan.

The suspended priests were forbidden from celebrating the sacraments. *Mei Magsino, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Priest files libel suit against local paper

MAASIN CITY—Father Edmund Resus, parish priest of San Francisco town, has filed libel charges against a local newspaper for publishing a column that accused him of politicking in the distribution of relief goods for the victims of the devastating landslides in December 2003 that killed at least 150 persons.

Resus also asked the court to order the respondent to pay him P1.5 million in damages for besmirching his reputation and humiliating him in his community.

Named respondent in the complaint filed before the Provincial Prosecutor's Office on Monday is Dodong Herrera, publisher and editor in chief of the Maasin Mail.

The case stemmed from a column written by one Bolantoy, obviously a pen-name, which was published in the weekly paper's Jan. 9-15 issue.

The column claimed that before giving the relief goods to the victims, Resus allegedly told the victims that these came from Southern Leyte Gov. Rosette Lerias.

The column also hit Resus, the parish administrator of St. Isidore Parish in San Francisco, for not blessing those who died in the tragedy, and for being a humbug, who craned his neck, just to be seen on television, dreaming that he was a candidate for mayor.

Jani Arnaiz, PDI Visayas Bureau

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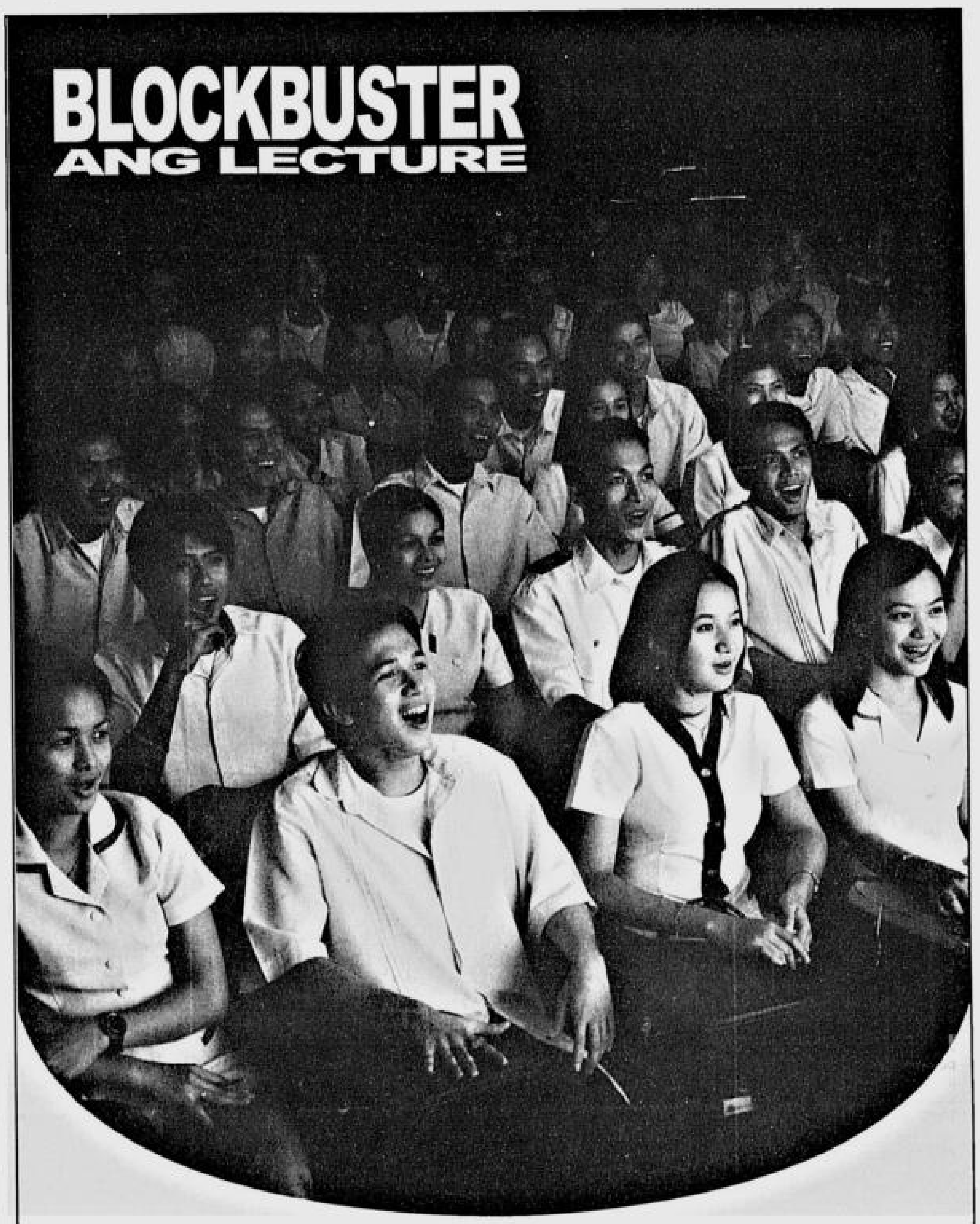

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Sacking of Dolphy ...

From page A1

Artists Para Kay Poe, said it was "an open secret that the administration has been bothered by Dolphy's show of support for Mr. Poe, so his head was offered to appease the gods of Malacañang."

Siguion-Reyna said the reported cancellation of Dolphy's show was "Da Queen's gambit to stop Da King," in reference to Ms Macapagal and Poe, respectively.

"The jester was sacrificed to bring a smile on the Queen's face. That's the political play," Siguion-Reyna said.

The President was quick to deny this: "Certainly not. I didn't even know he (Dolphy) had a show," she said at a press conference in Iloilo City where she is campaigning.

Housing Secretary Michael Defensor, the President's campaign spokesperson, and Press Secretary Milton Alingod also vehemently denied the allegation.

"Dolphy is beyond Malacañang. We have seen presidents come and go and Dolphy is there. A lot of stars from Channels 2 and 7 are being asked (to move to ABC 5)," Defensor said.

Alingod, a former GMA 7 executive, expressed disbelief that Malacañang would make such a move. "We're not (like that). Maybe that is a ploy by the opposition (itself)," he said.

Vergelio Tordera, secretary general of the FPJ Volunteers Brigade (FPJVB), said the Palace could have pressured the Lopez-owned ABS-CBN to cancel Dolphy's show in retaliation for his all-out support for Poe and "to serve as an unequivocal warning to show biz folk that they better think twice about sticking their necks out for FPJ."

Dolphy himself was unavailable for comment. He was expected to give an interview yesterday on ABS-CBN's show biz talk show "The Buzz," but instead Maloli Manalastas, ABS-CBN vice president for government, corporate affairs and public relations, read this statement:

"ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corporation acknowledges that there was indeed a preliminary discussion between management and Dolphy about his program. However, the discussion are matters private to both ABS-CBN and Mr. Rodolfo 'Dolphy' Quizon.

"The network leaves it to the discretion of Dolphy whether to disclose the matter or portions of the discussion."

The network added that "some parties are maliciously injecting politics in a purely show business issue ... The management of ABS-CBN has always respected, as it continues to respect, the right of its employees and talents to choose whichever candidate they may wish to support and vote in the coming elections ... ABS-CBN has never and will never exert any undue influence on its employees' or talents' right to choose which candidates ... they may wish to support this May elections."

After Manalastas gave the statement, "The Buzz" host Boy Abunda quickly segued to other burning show biz issues like the row between sisters Matet and Lotlot de Leon.

Sotto reacts

"You can't blame people for thinking politics about this particular issue," said Poe's campaign manager, Sen. Vicente Sotto III, in reaction to the ABS-CBN statement.

"As early as three weeks ago, information reaching us was that (ABS-CBN) management was said to have told their stars and talents that they must support President Macapagal-Arroyo and not FPJ," Sotto said.

He noted that so far Dolphy was the only ABS-CBN star to accompany Poe on his campaign sorties.

Nene Riego, Dolphy's publicist, said she had not spoken with the comedy king since Friday. "We were supposed to have dinner, but he canceled," she said in a phone interview yesterday.

Asked what Dolphy discussed with the network, Riego said it was a confidential meeting and Dolphy had not told anyone. *"Nagtataka nga siya kung paano lumabas yung istorya kasi hindi sa kanya nanggaling* (Dolphy himself was wondering where the story came from because he never told anyone)," she said.

Riego revealed that Dolphy taped an episode of "Home Along Da Airport" on Friday for airing next Saturday. Whether this is the final episode, "Only Dolphy knows," she stressed.

Is there another episode scheduled for taping? Again, Riego said: "Only Dolphy knows."

Unfortunately, Dolphy seemed to have dropped out of sight, and no one in his top-rated comedy show wanted to talk.

An industry source said there was a scheduled ABS-CBN station ID taping yesterday which required the presence of the network's big stars. The comedy king was a no-show; neither could he be contacted.

Poe, who was campaigning in Davao City, tried to mollify his colleagues in the local entertainment industry.

"I advised my colleagues to calm down and relax until after we get the entire picture," he told reporters in an ambush interview. *With a report from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

Oops! It's Bro. Eddie, not Eddie Gil

From page A1

first officer welcomed the pair aboard.

Then the officer committed a faux pas.

"We have two presidential candidates on board, Ping Lacson and Eddie Gil," he said over PR 182's public address system, drawing snickers from other passengers and guffaws from media members on the flight.

The fasten-seat-belt signs had just gone off when the miscue happened.

Villanueva, head of the Jesus Is Lord religious group, took it all with Christian grace.

The evangelist rose from his aisle seat in the sixth row and walked down the aisle to greet Lacson, seated up front in 1A.

"He may have just been misinformed," Villanueva told the INQUIRER after the plane landed at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

"I'm OK," he said, dismissing the incident.

Ironically, it was Villanueva who had petitioned the Comelec to disqualify Gil on the ground that his namesake was a nuisance candidate. The Comelec sustained him.

'Mea culpa'

Had Gil gone on with his candidacy, votes for "Eddie" would have gone to waste because the name was common to both Gil and Villanueva. The Villanueva camp believed it would have easily cost its candidate a lot of votes.

VIPs ON FLIGHT. Presidential candidates Panfilo Lacson and Bro. Eddie Villanueva share the same Philippine Airlines flight to Manila after their campaign sorties in Northern Mindanao. JOE GALVEZ

The first officer corrected his mistake minutes later.

"We'd like to make a correction on the VIPs we have on board ... Ping Lacson and Eddie Villanueva," the first officer said.

Passengers clapped, cheered and jeered.

The exchange of greetings between Lacson and Villanueva on the plane was their first despite their being billeted in the same hotel in Cagayan de Oro last week while they were barnstorming northern Mindanao.

"We're friends," Villanueva said of the opposition senator.

Lacson himself had an encounter with Villanueva supporters as his motorcade passed through the cities of Malaybalay and Valencia in Bukidnon.

"They weren't heckling us," Lacson said.

"There was just a friendly exchange of hand signals," he said, referring to the "iron fist" trademark of his campaign and the "peace sign" of the Villanueva group.

Taxpayers urged: Sue to stop gov't takeover

From page A1

reminded him of the government under President Ferdinand Marcos, which took over the "badly indebted" Herdis Group of Companies headed by Marcos crony Herminio Disini.

Under the agreement reached between the Department of Justice and Benpres, the Lopez holding firm will write off its stake in Maynilad, its joint venture with Suez Group of France (now Ondeo Philippines).

The deal entails the conversion of about P8 billion in unpaid concession fees of Maynilad into equity. The state regulator Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System will take a 61-percent stake in the water utility. As majority owner, the government through the MWSS would have to assume Maynilad's remaining debts of about P11 billion, according to the Water for People Network.

"How can the government justify a position of 61 percent? And in effect, it has condoned what has been ordered through arbitration for Maynilad to pay the government. It's a condonation of private sector indebtedness," Chavez said.

Last year, an arbitration panel of the Paris-based International Chamber of Commerce ordered Maynilad to pay the government P6.8 billion in overdue concession fees (payments for foreign debt assumed by Maynilad when it won in 1997 the bidding to operate the west zone of Metro Manila).

"(Cronyism) is making a comeback. And it's so timed very near the election that the motivation of this kind of action is an issue," Chavez said.

Win-win deal

Malacañang, however, continued to defend the arrangement as a "win-win" deal.

In an interview over RMN radio, the President's spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said the "quasi-reorganization" of Maynilad was based on the recommendation of the arbitration panel. The deal, according to Bunye, would ensure that water service remains uninterrupted, that those who lent money to Maynilad would have their debt converted to equity, and that Maynilad shareholders would write off their investments.

Bunye noted that the debt-for-equity conversion was not yet a done deal as this would have to pass the scrutiny of the Securities and Exchange Commission and the courts.

He said criticism of the deal were all coming from politicians who probably wanted the water service to stop so that they could blame it on the government. "It is in our judgment that the interest of the public to have clean water is our top priority. It would be an even bigger problem if the faucets ran dry," he said.

Bad precedent

Those who criticized the deal were not all politicians. A businessman in Manila said the government move to take over Maynilad from the Lopezes would set a "bad precedent."

"What would stop other companies from seeking government's help once they find themselves in a deep financial hole like Benpres Holdings?" asked Sergio Ortiz-Luis, president of the Philippine Exporters Confederation Inc.

He said the deal was unjustified because the government should let Benpres and its foreign partner face the consequences of their business decisions.

"Nobody forced them to bid for the water concession in 1997," Ortiz-Luis said. "Why should the government and the public pay for their mistakes when they invested in the concession to make money for themselves?"

Another businessman said Benpres and Suez Group should be "men enough" to honor their contract until the end.

"They can't just retire in the middle of the game because they are losing now. They should know that risk and losses are part of the deal having been in business for a long time," Jesus Arranza, president of the Federation of Philippine Industries, said.

Donald Dee said that while the government might be "justified" in taking over the operations of Maynilad (to maintain water supply and distribution to half of Metro Manila's population), taking over its shareholders' obligations was "unnecessary."

"The government has the right to take over a utility if it is for the public's interest. Maynilad's debt problems should be the concern of its own shareholders and not the concern of the government," said Dee, executive vice president of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Francis Chua, executive vice president of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce, said it was "absolutely necessary" for the government to take over any public utility with poor and efficient service, "especially those overcharging the public."

However, Chua said the government should first conduct a thorough audit before pushing through with any takeover plans, especially in Maynilad's case which involves billions of pesos in debt.

Privatized profit

Raul Roco, presidential standard-bearer of the Alyansa ng Pag-asa, said the deal smacked of crony capitalism.

"We have privatized profit. If it's profit, private. If it's loss, government and Filipino. That is the policy of the Macapagal administration. And we can't afford six more years of that," he said at the same briefing.

Asked if he would reverse the agreement if he got elected, Roco said: "Review. All the midnight contracts can be reviewed because we don't know if these were done or influenced by politics."

He dismissed Bunye's call to the opposition to spare the issue from politics. "How can they say this is part of politics on the part of the opposition? This is politics on the part of the government," he said.

Perfecto Yasay Jr., former chair of the Securities and Exchange Commission, said the SEC could look into any possible "watering down" or dilution of Maynilad's shares pending approval of the latter's restructuring plan.

Yasay, a senatorial candidate of the Alyansa ng Pag-asa, said the SEC would have to approve the restructuring plan "once the deal is completed."

He pointed out that the government move to take over Maynilad, which the MWSS earlier privatized, was confusing the public.

Higher rates

Former Tarlac Rep. Herminio Aquino, Roco's running mate, warned that the government's deal with Maynilad would result in higher rates for the consumers.

"The government not only failed to collect; it absorbed more expenses. So the question is: How will this be collected? The only way for the government to recover this is to raise tariffs. The rates will be passed on to the consumers," he said.

"So that's what we mean by everything will be borne by the consuming public. And the company that bid for it seven years ago, that operated it, that managed it, is now off the hook."

US-led coalition now a lot less willing

From page A1

shore up the US-led "coalition of the willing" that appears to have been shaken by the Madrid massacre that inflicted a strategic political blow to the war on terror. In the backlash to bombing, which killed 202 train commuters and wounded 1,500 others, the conservative government of Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar, was swept out of office in a shock defeat to the Socialist Party.

The Socialist prime minister, Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, reversed Aznar's policy of close alignment with Bush by saying his government would make good its pledge to withdraw 1,300 Spanish troops in Iraq unless the United Nations takes military control of occupation forces by June.

Zapatero castigated the invasion as "disastrous" and the occupation of Iraq a "disaster."

"You cannot organize a war with lies," he said, referring to the exaggerated claims by Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair that Iraq had to be invaded because it possessed weapons of mass destruction.

Zapatero's repudiation of Aznar's alliance with Bush had a domino effect on some of the US allies. Against warnings that withdrawal from the alliance would be seen as appeasement and a victory for terrorists, Poland's President Aleksander Kwasniewski said 2,400 Polish troops would leave Iraq months earlier than planned.

Kwasniewski said Poland had been misled over Iraqi's suspected weapons of mass destruction and had been "taken for a ride." Polish troops have control over one of the key military sectors in Iraq and have jurisdiction over Spanish troops, who have been posted in Iraq for peacekeeping, not combat, duties. The Philippines also has an 80-man peacekeeping contingent in Iraq under Polish command.

Showing nervousness after the Madrid attack, South Korea has announced it would not send its 3,500 troops to the area that the American commanders had requested them to be deployed, although the troops would go to other areas.

No reward

An American-European expert on strategic and international studies said, "There is no question that the so-called coalition of the willing is now a lot less willing than it was before March 11. It's not only because Spain has dropped out, but because other states are now saying, 'Hey, there is a price to pay for backing this thing and, frankly, no reward.'"

One of the carrots dangled by the US in seeking allies for the coalition of the willing is that they could participate in contracts for Iraq's reconstruction. The contracts are controlled by the giant US construction conglomerate Halliburton, which is associated with Vice President Richard Cheney.

While Spain had been one of staunchest US allies in the war as shown by Aznar's diplomatic support for invasion at the UN Security Council and the deployment of Spanish troops to Iraq after the invasion, Madrid has yet to see the rewards in terms of share in the construction largesse.

During the invasion, the Macapagal administration, which decided to dispatch a peacekeeping contingent, mobilized Filipino business groups to aggressively seek contracts with Halliburton. It is not known how much worth of contracts have been awarded to Filipino contractors.

In the aftermath of the Spanish pullback following the Madrid bombing, American hawks not only lashed out at the Socialists for abandoning the alliance with the United States but also derided Spanish voters who rejected the Aznar government after the bombing.

The voters turned out against Aznar not only because they believed Spain was punished by the terrorists because of its backing of the US-led war. They were also angry over the way Aznar handled the bombing. They widely perceived that the government covered up al-Qaida's involvement in the massacre by blaming too quickly the Basque separatist group, ETA.

Hawkish comment

This comment of an American hawk is typical of the appeasement argument which runs that capitulation to threats of terrorists of further attack would not make any country safe from attacks: "The Europeans are willing to be cowed by terror into voting for appeasers. Message to terrorists: Commit terrorism on the eve of election, say you're doing it to punish the government for standing by the US, and you can drive a wedge between Western allies."

The flaw in this argument, however, is that al-Qaida terrorists have carried out attacks not only against supporters of the Iraq war. In October 2002, terrorists associated with al-Qaida networks in Indonesia bombed a resort in Bali, killing 2002 holiday makers, mostly Australians.

The Bali attack was staged before the invasion of Iraq, and exploded in an Islamic country, not a "crusader" country against which Osama bin Laden has no historical scores to settle.

Filipino nationalists have raised the argument that support of the US-led war on Iraq makes the Philippines a likely target of terrorist attack, citing the Madrid bombing. We are not sure; we are likely on the hit list. That depends upon how high we are on the list or the political impact of such an attack in further weakening the US-led coalition.

Carolina Hernandez of the University of the Philippines has argued that scrapping of the Philippine collaboration with the United States in the joint military exercises (Balikatan) cannot be the answer to avoiding terrorist attack. Long before the Iraq invasion, we have had our own homegrown terrorist group, Abu Sayyaf, which has links to the al Qaida. Its attacks antedated Iraq.

The question to ask is: Has the joint exercises with the United States and close cooperation with it on security issues enhanced our ability to preempt terrorist attacks. The Madrid case should not be used as a generalized model.

Group seeks presidential bets' agenda for jobless

From page A1

crisis and had already reached the same levels as the 1984-85 recession.

Based on National Statistics Office data, about 4 million Filipinos, including 615,000 college graduates, were jobless in January. The 11-percent unemployment rate was higher than the 10.6 percent in January 2003. [The actual unemployment rate is bigger because those who have given up hope of finding a job and are no longer looking for one are not counted as unemployed.]

Of the 31.5 million Filipinos who are employed, 18 percent or more than 5.5 million are underemployed, according to the NSO data. They are looking for better jobs or are in need of longer working hours to compensate their low salaries or short working hours.

Because many Filipinos are looking for jobs, those who are employed cannot ask for higher wages, according to the APL.

The labor group noted that the crisis was happening amid steady growth in the gross domestic product (the total value of goods produced and services rendered in a given period.)

The GDP grew about 4.5 percent annually over the past six years, indicating that progress is concentrated in the upper class of society, according to the APL.

The APL said the crisis was due to wrong economic policies the government had been pursuing. Policies like aggressive import liberalization and tariff reduction had led to import dependence and neglected the development of the country's local business sector, the group said.

The labor group said the government was relying heavily on foreign investments for job opportunities. But foreign investments have not translated into more jobs for Filipinos, according to the APL.

Pascual said a "change in mentality" was needed among government leaders to address the unemployment crisis.

APL secretary general Joshua Mata said the government should focus on developing local industries.

But he said the presidential candidates could not commit to changing the current economic policies out of fear of antagonizing big businessmen and powerful foreign investors.

Besides the unemployment crisis, the country is also facing a debt crisis, but the two main contenders in the May presidential election have offered few concrete plans to address the country's economic woes.

With neither President Macapagal-Arroyo nor movie star Fernando Poe Jr. offering hard financial policies, the peso has gone into a nosedive as the business community holds its breath.

With a report from AFP

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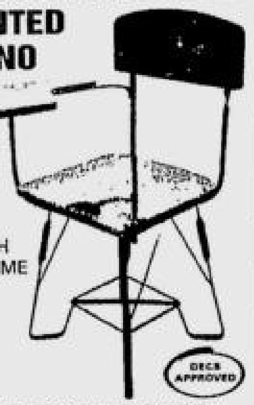

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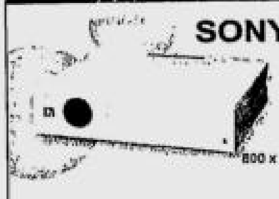

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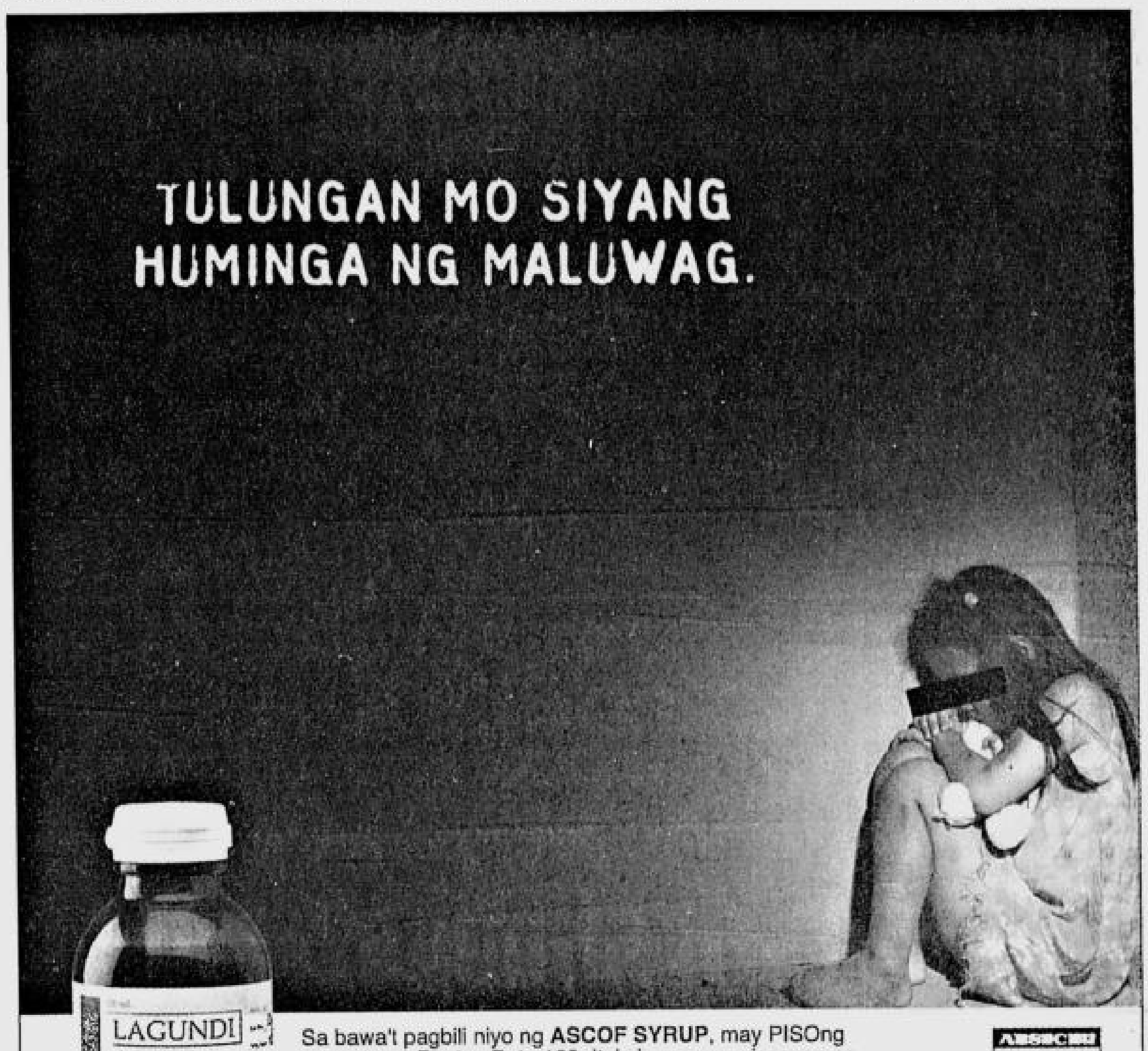

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BOMBO RADYO DZNC AND STAR FM CAUAYAN,CITY CLOSED!!!

THE TRUE STORY

The whole Province of Isabela witnessed the absurd and baseless accusations hurled by the so-called "ecumenical" personalities and left-leaning groups designed to mislead and misinform the people in the guise of protesting against the closure of Bombo Radyo and Star FM Cauayan City. These people *never reflect* the real hopes, dreams and grievances of the masses. Moreover, they have *never been instrumental* in bringing development to the Isabelinos.

BOMBO RADYO DZNC CAUAYAN was closed in the year 2002 for failure to secure ZONING CLEARANCE, a requirement for application for Mayor's permit.

As a result of the closure, BOMBO filed a Special Civil Action for ***Mandamus*** against the City of Cauayan, et. al docketed as SCA No. 19-124

On January 14, 2003, BOMBO submitted the following documents:

1.) "Assumption of Direct Jurisdiction" dated December 3, 2001 docketed as DAR Administrative Case No. A-0200A-07A-002 signed by *Director Abrino Aydinan,* and

2.) "ORDER" dated March 14, 2002 docketed as DAR **administrative Case No. A-0200A-07B-002** also signed by *Dir. Abrino Aydinan.*

(herein referred to as **DAR ORDERS**)

BOMBO RADYO was issued the Mayor's permit based on the above-mentioned documents. *The City of Cauayan thru counsel, filed a motion to dismiss SCA No. 19-124 for being moot and academic,* BOMBO having been issued the Mayor's permit. The case was dismissed.

Inquiries were made with the Regional Office of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), Region II. The DAR thru Mr. Pedrito Maranan, Head of the Regional Center for Land Use Policy, Planning and Implementation (RCLUPPI) issued a certification stating among others, that the said Office **has no official records nor case docketed of the petition filed by Bombo Radyo and the order issued bearing Administrative Case No. A-0200A-07B-002.**

On March 4, 2003, BOMBO RADYO was required to show proof of genuineness of the **DAR Orders,** otherwise, their Mayor's Permit shall be revoked. BOMBO RADYO asked for time to investigate the matter. The City of Cauayan gave them 15 days. Upon successive requests made by BOMBO Radyo, the time was extended to thirty days, to six months, to another 15 days until such time that their Mayor's Permit expired on December 2003.

It appears that BOMBO knew all along that the **DAR ORDERS** are not on file with the Office of the DAR Region II, its records Section and RCLUPPI. A certified true copy of a letter dated October 30, 2003, addressed to **Charmy Sabigan** (Station manager of BOMBO DZNC) and signed by Regional Director Renato Navata of the DAR Regional Office stated among others, that ***there are no such*** **DAR ORDERS** docketed in the book of entry of the DAR Regional Office, its Records Section and the RCLUPPI ***neither are there any official records appertaining thereto which are on file*** with the said offices.

On February 17, 2004, the City of Cauayan caused the closure of *all business establishments* operating without the mayor's permit. **BOMBO RADYO VOLUNTARILY CLOSED.**

On February 27, 2004, a criminal complaint for **FALSIFICATION BY PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS AND USE OF FALSIFIED DOCUMENTS** was filed against **CHARMY SABIGAN** and Gerry Carabaccan (Station Manager - Star FM).

The closure of Bombo Radyo and STAR FM reflects the firm stand of the City Government of Cauayan on implementing the law. Nobody should be exempted from the application of the law be it the clergy.

The **PEOPLE OF THE CITY OF CAUAYAN,** worked so hard to bring progress and development in the City. They know ***from their own experience*** that strict compliance and enforcement of the law is the single best instrument to ensure continuing progress in the City. They ***know, first hand***, that support and cooperation with the City Government offers a far more promising method of ensuring continued progress ***than does the threat of retaliation.***

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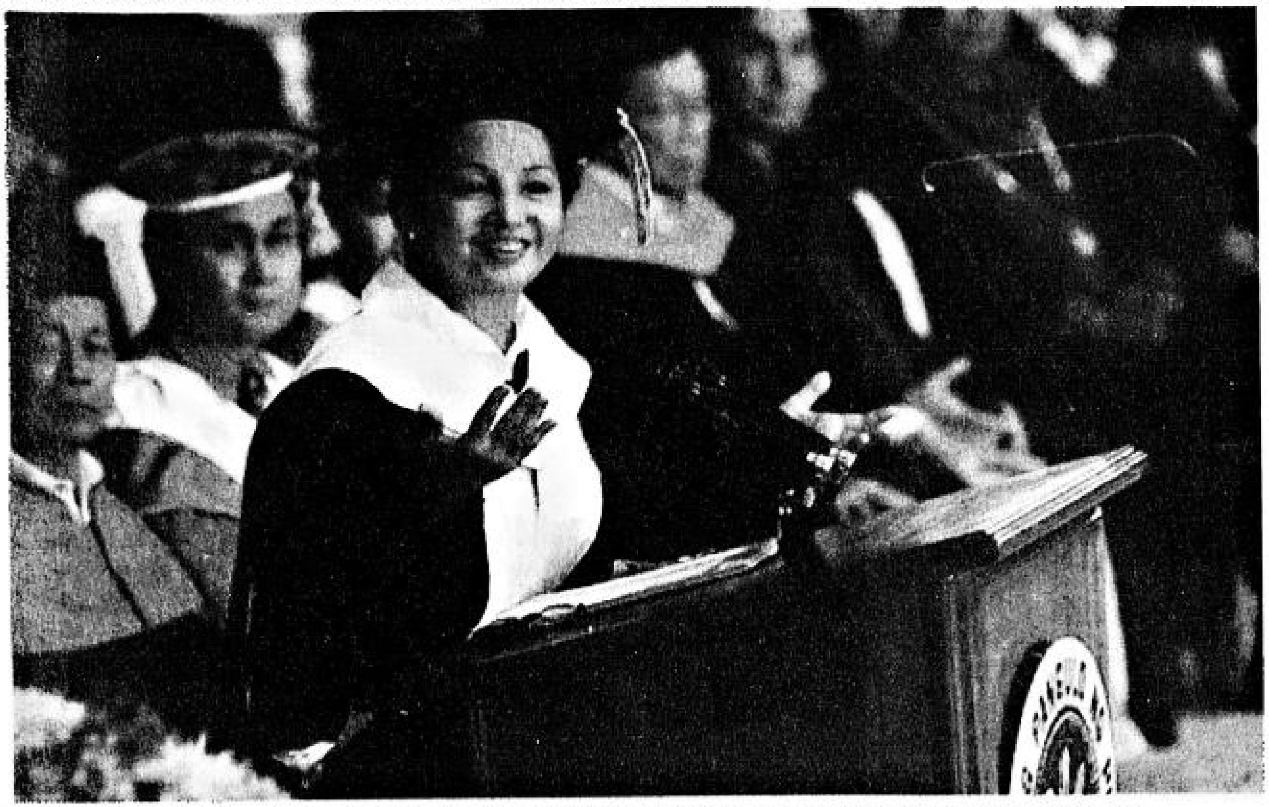

DUMAGUETE CITY: Tapping the student vote, the President makes a pitch before graduates of the Central Visayas Polytechnic University. JERRY CARUAU/ PCPO MALACAÑANG PHOTO

Discipline, mem'ry for names, places, forever young

From page A1

Karanasan sa Kinabukasan—that collectively plays up the achievements under the Macapagal administration in fighting crime and corruption, giving jobs to the unemployed, initiating fiscal reforms, and battling insurgency, among others.

More than that, however, is that among the five presidential candidates, Ms Macapagal is the most seasoned in the campaign arena. She was a senator for two terms and, later, vice president before she assumed the presidency after her predecessor, Joseph Estrada, was deposed in January 2001.

All in the family

It also helps that she is the daughter of a former president, a unique circumstance not lost on her handlers who add to her litany of qualifications the fact that she is the only President's daughter in Philippine history who has become President, and who has decided to seek a full term.

The comparisons with her father, former President Diosdado Macapagal, are inevitable.

Ms Macapagal, in fact, was quoted in an interview once that she was very much her father's daughter, "in almost every sense, politically and personally."

What are the traits she picked up from him that have helped her immensely in her campaign today?

"His tirelessness and strong sense of discipline," she answers quickly.

She is sitting in front of a desk at the Malacañang study room, in between shooting an "infomercial" to be shown on television soon. The desk is of old Philippine hardwood that she took pains to retrieve from the Palace *bodega* when she assumed the presidency. For sentimental reasons, she wanted it back in the room—now adorned with huge paintings of orchids and vases of fresh white roses, her favorite flower—because her father had used it when he was President.

"This desk was used by all the Presidents—except President Estrada—since Manuel Quezon's time and, of course, I wanted to use it for this room. It was one of the few pieces of furniture I recall seeing when we were here," she says, adding that Quezon's grandson (and now INQUIRER columnist) Manuel Quezon III helped her look for it.

Travelling Presidents

Fourteen years old when she moved to Malacañang with her family, the young Gloria did her bit for the campaign, making her own sales pitch for her dad in the public markets. "I wasn't there too often because I was in school, but I knew about my father's untiring efforts to go around the country and meet the common folk," she says. "He had practically gone to every nook and cranny of the Philippines!"

Diosdado Macapagal's reputation for unlimited countryside travel was duly noted by a wary media that had earlier dubbed him the "Poor Boy from Lubao (Pampanga)," in reference to his almost Dickensian childhood. As Vice President, he was reported to have traversed the entire archipelago, establishing a firm grassroots connection that would serve him well when he moved on to the next step: the presidency.

Winning the premier post in the 1961 elections by a wide margin, the pattern continued when he sought a new mandate four years later.

Then Manila Times columnist Max Soliven, in his column "By the Way" written in February 1965, said: "The bombing raids on North Vietnam remain of scant interest to him (Macapagal). He's busy doing his own version of 'carpet bombing.' Before November, he intends to raid each of the country's 1,300 municipalities, and he's getting there."

Soliven continued: "The latest campaign statistics from the Liberal Party show that only 200 remote municipalities remain unvisited. And at the rate of four or five municipalities a day, the goal will be reached within the next two or three months. Then, if we too are lucky, the President may be able to turn his attention to running the government."

Macapagal would earlier boast that he had visited practically every city and town in the country, and all over the world, "in countries both capitalist and communist, and in all continents except Africa where I visited only 12 countries."

The travel itch rubbing off on his daughter, Ms Macapagal today draws on that singular advantage of knowing the country's geographical landscape and political infrastructure like the back of her hand. It comes with years of combing the countryside, digging familial roots, and interacting with local government officials from the time she was elected senator (twice), to her successful bid for the vice presidency, practically retracing her father's footsteps—and reaping the windfall.

Claudio admits that familiarity with the terrain and the local leadership can be a huge asset. "She is an extremely well-travelled person, having toured the country and the rest of the world even when she was senator and vice president," he says. "And her memory for places, names and faces is fantastic."

Malacañang reporters marvel at her ability to identify even small towns that are tiny specks on the map, and to match faces with names, a boon especially when you campaign in far-flung municipalities or off-the-beaten track destinations ,where name recall can be even more important than promises of new wells or new roads.

Passion for discipline

The stamina could also be genetic, like her artlessness in looking forever young.

A few weeks short of 57, (rivals Sen. Panfilo Lacson is the youngest candidate at age 55, evangelist Bro. Eddie Villanueva, 57; former Sen. Raul Roco, 62; and actor Fernando Poe Jr., the oldest at 64), Ms Macapagal says she subscribes to no particular diet ("only vitamins") or exercise to keep fit for the arduous campaign schedule (except for golf, an activity she has in common with her father "although he took it up only on retirement, while I have been at it longer. Besides, the First Gentleman (Jose Miguel Arroyo) comes from a family of golfers").

QUEZON CITY: Her critics say she mixes her governance activities with downright campaigning, but the President waves away the charges and hopes to win the vote based on her campaign platform emphasizing experience and sincerity. EPA/MIKE ALQUINTO

OZAMIZ CITY: In one of her many unscheduled stops, Ms Macapagal takes time out to greet a mother. Her facility with languages allows her to reach out to audiences in all points of the archipelago. She can speak Filipino, Ilokano, Cebuano, Ilonggo, Chavacano and Kapampangan—apart from English and Spanish. VAL HANDUMON

She sleeps seven hours, tops, although looking at her packed schedule that would have fazed even a relentless drillmaster, one wonders how she breezes through the day with not a strand of hair out of place, no crease in the immaculate shirt that has gone through thick crowds under a punishing sun. And most admirable of all, she gets to her appointments on time.

"It's really the discipline," says the President. "My father saw to it that we had our priorities right, and that we had to work these out within a reasonable time frame. He was very particular about being on time, and did not tolerate tardiness."

She then plucks an anecdote from her grab bag of memories, narrating how, as a new bride, she and her husband were invited for lunch with her parents. "We arrived a few minutes late, and I really got it from him. Ever since, I always made it a point to be punctual, and sometimes even arrive ahead of time."

The habit has stuck, and has proven to be valuable in a well-oiled GMA presidential campaign that runs like a sleek precision machine, rarely missing a beat. "When the President says she will meet local officials at 2 p.m., she is there on the dot," says her campaign spokesperson, Housing Secretary Michael Defensor. "She does not like to make people wait."

"The idea of letting people, specially school children, stand by the road under the hot sun or in a stuffy gym to watch out for the presidential entourage does not sit well with her," adds Social Welfare Secretary Corazon Soliman.

"*Ayaw din niya ng mga hakot* (She also doesn't the idea of obliging people to show up in the rallies)," volunteers campaign coordinator Lupita Kashiwahara, who took time off from her duties as a board member of the International House at the University of California in Berkeley, among other things, to join the campaign.

'Should have communicated more'

DAVAO DEL NORTE: No place is too far for the peripatetic Ms Macapagal, on a visit to the province wearing the tribal finery of Mindanao's indigenous peoples. VAL HANDUMON

Some, however, say this show of concern, comes, oddly enough, at the start of the campaign season, and that she is a Gloria-come-lately in this field.

The media has endlessly played up the President's legendary temper, a facet of her personality she does not care to hide, and that manifests in the public berating of her own officials who are not up to her standards, at her impatience—or noncommittal remarks to reporters whose questions are not to her liking.

A reporter who had dogged her trail when she ran for vice president in 1998 says their group had practically no stories to write because she was not in the habit of holding press conferences during the three-month campaign period, having better luck with Jose de Venecia (who was running for president) who called for press briefings at the drop of a hat. And if there were any, the reporter continues, there was hardly anything they could get from her.

"Ms. Macapagal was the master of the one-liner, at least during the time when I covered her," the reporter adds.

"She loved saying that as a social scientist, she does not speculate and does not answer questions with ifs and buts. On the other hand, she appeared to have identified with the *masa*(common folk) and was a great hit with them. They found her cute, especially when the Nora Aunor look became part of her PR strategy. The crowd wanted to see her dance on stage, too. They obviously adored her."

"I cannot be what I am not," says Ms Macapagal. "What you see is what you get."

Admitting that she could have communicated more, given a chance to re-engineer her life, she hastens to add: "When you do a lot of problem-solving, it is difficult to be pleasant. For example, I inherited three million jobless Filipinos from my predecessor. That won't make me smile. If you see me impatient when someone does not do his job, that's not a pleasant matter. Fortunately, it's the discipline that I got from my father which I have brought to my government that helps me create these three million jobs."

Common creed

Ms Macapagal topped the senatorial slate as a reelectionist in 1995 with a record 16 million votes, the highest in the history of local elections, and duplicated the feat in 1998 with 13 million—two million votes more than the hugely popular Joseph Estrada. Critics attribute this to the magic of the Macapagal name and because of public relations wizardry that billed her as a look-alike of Aunor, then the country's reigning superstar.

Media hype, many say, identifying Diosdado Macapagal with the masses, also led him to modest victories in the congressional and vice presidential elections and eventually, the presidential elections in 1961 where he won 55 percent of the votes, beating four other candidates in the process.

Like father, like daughter on the campaign trail?

And if Diosdado Macapagal's article of faith sounds familiar, it is because it is a creed perennially echoed by his daughter: Always do what is right, and do your best. God will take care of the rest.

Poll campaigners form text brigades

From page A1

political weapon.

President Macapagal-Arroyo's camp knows its power. So do the campaign strategists of her rivals.

Raymond Burgos does not leave home without his two mobile phones.

As media chief and campaign strategist for opposition presidential candidate Sen. Panfilo Lacson, Burgos uses his handsets to compose and send campaign propaganda through the SMS (short message service) or text messaging—the cheapest and most popular form of spreading information ahead of the May 10 polls.

"It is the fastest way to relay messages to our supporters. We can also relay our internal propaganda needs through texting and it is cheaper," Burgos told AFP at Lacson's campaign headquarters in Makati City.

Elsewhere in Manila, Maricar Quiambao's fingers hover over the computer keyboard as she prepares to compose a message to Filipino voters.

"Don't vote for FPJ," she says, laughing mischievously at her slight against movie star turned presidential front-runner Fernando Poe Jr.

Quiambao, a campaign adviser to politicians linked to the President, is testing software to send political text messages to thousands of mobile telephones simultaneously.

By the time Filipinos go to the polls on May 10 to elect a president and 17,000 other officials across the archipelago, many mobile phone owners will have received tens of thousands of messages aimed at influencing their decisions at the polling booth.

Most will be harmless jokes knocking down a candidate, but others will be potentially damaging rumors that could swing the vote in a close race.

Industry estimates show about 22 million of the 84 million Filipinos own cell phones, the majority of them electronically savvy youths who comprise a large portion of the electorate.

Mobile phone owners send an average of 10 to 15 text messages a day, and receive more than twice that number—from simple greetings to loved ones and bawdy jokes to movie events and news alerts.

At one peso per message, SMS is a cheaper alternative to traditional campaign materials like brochures, caps and printed shirts that could run into the millions. It also has wider reach—a finance department official estimates that 150 million text messages circulate daily in the Philippines, making it a world leader.

Text messaging has become such a lucrative revenue source that the government is reviving a proposal to impose an excise tax on text messages, the finance official said. *(See related story in Business, Page B1.)*

The heavy text traffic has made mobile operators Smart Communications Inc., Globe Telecom Inc. and Pilipino Telephone Corp. some of the strongest companies in an underperforming economy.

"It's now an effective conveyor of black propaganda," says Sen. Edgardo Angara, president of Poe's Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino party, the main opposition bloc.

Why text messaging has caught on so rapidly in the Southeast Asian nation is the subject of some debate.

Some say Filipinos are shy and appreciate the relative anonymity of texting. Others say conventions such as inquiring after the health of one another's families before starting to chat verbally has made SMS an attractive time-saver.

Certainly, money is a factor. Sending a message can cost as little as half a peso, an affordable option in a country where the minimum wage in the capital is just P280 a day.

It is also a cheap way to spread propaganda.

Send a message to campaign members who have been instructed to forward it to friends and supporters. Within hours, thousands of mobile phones are bleeping.

"This is the first presidential campaign where cellular phones are playing a major role," Burgos said, his phones constantly beeping in the middle of the interview.

"We saw that it could be an effective tool. We are now really maximizing this."

The Lacson camp has a "text brigade" composed of volunteers whose only job is to spread calendars and news about the candidate through SMS and block or counter negative publicity.

They work behind the scenes independently and use highly advanced software puchased from Hong Kong that could spread more than 100 text messages in a minute, Burgos said. *Reports from Reuters and AFP*

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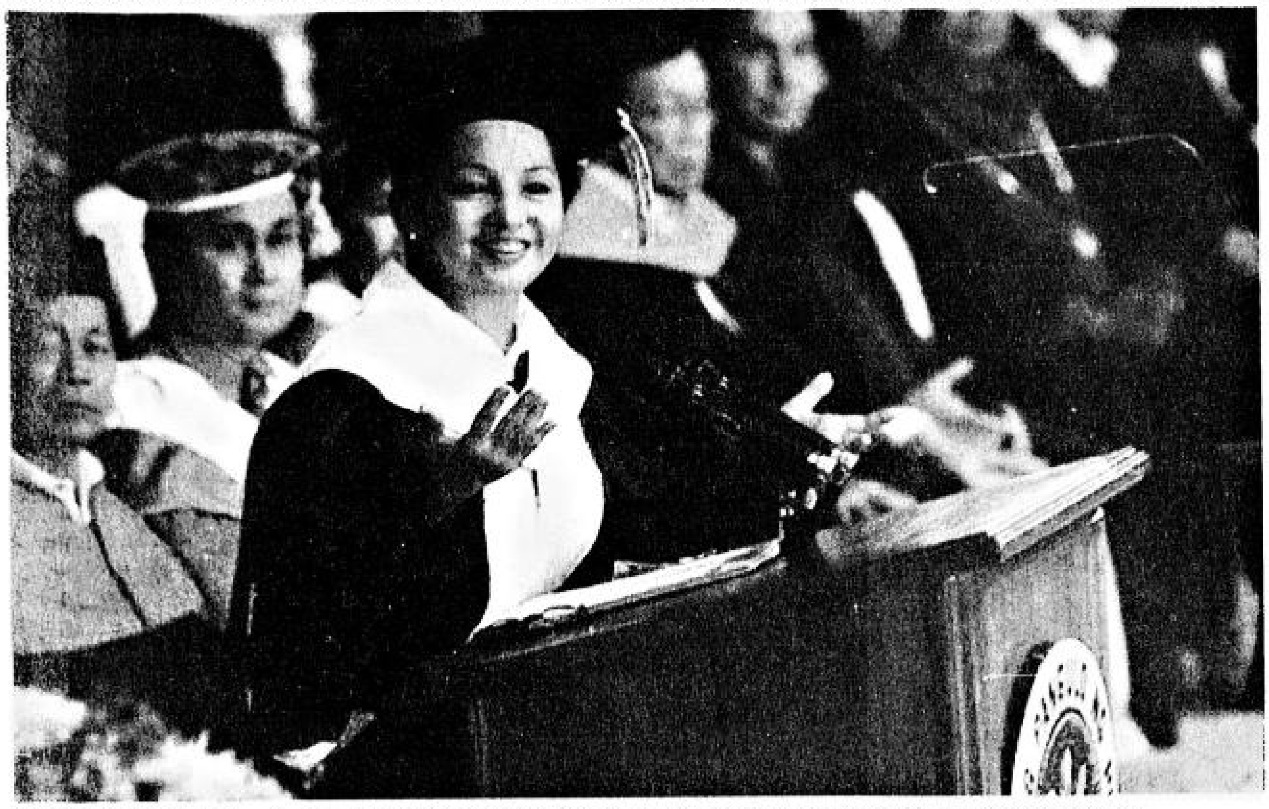
THE CHARM OFFENSIVE

ELECTION 2004



DUMAGUETE CITY: Tapping the student vote, the President makes a pitch before graduates of the Central Visayas Polytechnic University. JERRY CARUAU PCPO MALACANANG PHOTO

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From page A1

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Travelling Presidents

Fourteen years old when she moved to Malacañang with her family, the young Gloria did her bit for the campaign, making her own sales pitch for her dad in the public markets. "I wasn't there too often because I was in school, but I knew about my father's untiring efforts to go around the country and meet the common folk," she says. "He had practically gone to every nook and cranny of the Philippines!"

Diosdado Macapagal's reputation for unlimited countryside travel was duly noted by a wary media that had earlier dubbed him the "Poor Boy from Lubao (Pampanga)," in reference to his almost Dickensian childhood. As Vice President, he was reported to have traversed the entire archipelago, establishing a firm grassroots connection that would serve him well when he moved on to the next step: the presidency.

Winning the premier post in the 1961 elections by a wide margin, the pattern continued when he sought a new mandate four years later.

Then Manila Times columnist Max Soliven, in his column "By the Way" written in February 1965, said: "The bombing raids on North Vietnam remain of scant interest to him (Macapagal). He's busy doing his own version of 'carpet bombing.' Before November, he intends to raid each of the country's 1,300 municipalities, and he's getting there."

Soliven continued: "The latest campaign statistics from the Liberal Party show that only 200 remote municipalities remain unvisited. And at the rate of four or five municipalities a day, the goal will be reached within the next two or three months. Then, if we too are lucky, the President may be able to turn his attention to running the government."

Macapagal would earlier boast that he had visited practically every city and town in the country, and all over the world, "in countries both capitalist and communist, and in all continents except Africa where I visited only 12 countries."

The travel itch rubbing off on his daughter, Ms Macapagal today draws on that singular advantage of knowing the country's geographical landscape and political infrastructure like the back of her hand. It comes with years of combing the countryside, digging familial roots, and interacting with local government officials from the time she was elected senator (twice), to her successful bid for the vice presidency, practically retracing her father's footsteps—and reaping the windfall.

Claudio admits that familiarity with the terrain and the local leadership can be a huge asset. "She is an extremely well-travelled person, having toured the country and the rest of the world even when she was senator and vice president," he says. "And her memory for places, names and faces is fantastic."

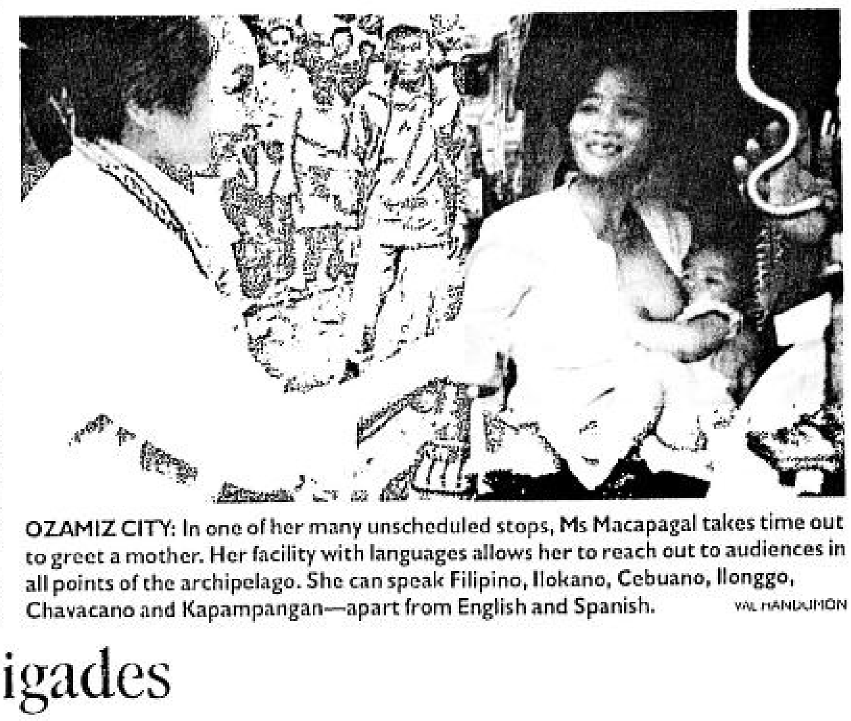
Malacañang reporters marvel at her ability to identify even small towns that are tiny specks on the map, and to match faces with names, a boon especially when you campaign in far-flung municipalities or off-the-beaten track destinations ,where name recall can be even more important than promises of new wells or new roads.

Passion for discipline

The stamina could also be genetic, like her artlessness in looking forever young.

A few weeks short of 57, (rivals Sen. Panfilo Lacson is the youngest candidate at age 55, evangelist Bro. Eddie Villanueva, 57; former Sen. Raul Roco, 62; and actor Fernando Poe Jr., the oldest at 64).

QUEZON CITY: Her critics say she mixes her governance activities with downright campaigning, but the President waves away the charges and hopes to win the vote based on her campaign platform emphasizing experience and sincerity. EPA/MIKE ALQUINTO



OZAMIZ CITY: In one of her many unscheduled stops, Ms Macapagal takes time out to greet a mother. Her facility with languages allows her to reach out to audiences in all points of the archipelago. She can speak Filipino, Ilokano, Cebuano, Ilonggo, Chavacano and Kapampangan—apart from English and Spanish. VAL HANDUMON

Ms Macapagal says she subscribes to no particular diet ("only vitamins") or exercise to keep fit for the arduous campaign schedule (except for golf, an activity she has in common with her father "although he took it up only on retirement, while I have been at it longer. Besides, the First Gentleman (Jose Miguel Arroyo) comes from a family of golfers").

She sleeps seven hours, tops, although looking at her packed schedule that would have fazed even a relentless drillmaster, one wonders how she breezes through the day with not a strand of hair out of place, no crease in the immaculate shirt that has gone through thick crowds under a punishing sun. And most admirable of all, she gets to her appointments on time.

"It's really the discipline," says the President. "My father saw to it that we had our priorities right, and that we had to work these out within a reasonable time frame. He was very particular about being on time, and did not tolerate tardiness."

She then plucks an anecdote from her grab bag of memories, narrating how, as a new bride, she and her husband were invited for lunch with her parents. "We arrived a few minutes late, and I really got it from him. Ever since, I always made it a point to be punctual, and sometimes even arrive ahead of time."

The habit has stuck, and has proven to be valuable in a well-oiled GMA presidential campaign that runs like a sleek precision machine, rarely missing a beat. "When the President says she will meet local officials at 2 p.m., she is there on the dot," says her campaign spokesperson, Housing Secretary Michael Defensor. "She does not like to make people wait."

"The idea of letting people, specially school children, stand by the road under the hot sun or in a stuffy gym to watch out for the presidential entourage does not sit well with her," adds Social Welfare Secretary Corazon Soliman.

"*Ayaw din niya ng mga hakot* (She also doesn't the idea of obliging people to show up in the rallies)," volunteers campaign coordinator Lupita Kashiwahara, who took time off from her duties as a board member of the International House at the University of California in Berkeley, among other things, to join the campaign.

'Should have communicated more'

Some, however, say this show of concern, comes, oddly enough, at the start of the campaign season, and that she is a Gloria-come-lately in this field.

DAVAO DEL NORTE: No place is too far for the peripatetic Ms Macapagal, on a visit to the province wearing the tribal finery of Mindanao's indigenous peoples. VAL HANDUMON

The media has endlessly played up the President's legendary temper, a facet of her personality she does not care to hide, and that manifests in the public berating of her own officials who are not up to her standards, at her impatience—or noncommittal remarks to reporters whose questions are not to her liking.

A reporter who had dogged her trail when she ran for vice president in 1998 says their group had practically no stories to write because she was not in the habit of holding press conferences during the three-month campaign period, having better luck with Jose de Venecia (who was running for president) who called for press briefings at the drop of a hat. And if there were any, the reporter continues, there was hardly anything they could get from her.

"Ms. Macapagal was the master of the one-liner, at least during the time when I covered her," the reporter adds.

"She loved saying that as a social scientist, she does not speculate and does not answer questions with ifs and buts. On the other hand, she appeared to have identified with the *masa*(common folk) and was a great hit with them. They found her cute, especially when the Nora Aunor look became part of her PR strategy. The crowd wanted to see her dance on stage, too. They obviously adored her."

"I cannot be what I am not," says Ms Macapagal. "What you see is what you get."

Admitting that she could have communicated more, given a chance to re-engineer her life, she hastens to add: "When you do a lot of problem-solving, it is difficult to be pleasant. For example, I inherited three million jobless Filipinos from my predecessor. That won't make me smile. If you see me impatient when someone does not do his job, that's not a pleasant matter. Fortunately, it's the discipline that I got from my father which I have brought to my government that helps me create these three million jobs."

Common creed

Ms Macapagal topped the senatorial slate as a reelectionist in 1995 with a record 16 million votes, the highest in the history of local elections, and duplicated the feat in 1998 with 13 million—two million votes more than the hugely popular Joseph Estrada. Critics attribute this to the magic of the Macapagal name and because of public relations wizardry that billed her as a look-alike of Aunor, then the country's reigning superstar.

Media hype, many say, identifying Diosdado Macapagal with the masses, also led him to modest victories in the congressional and vice presidential elections and eventually, the presidential elections in 1961 where he won 55 percent of the votes, beating four other candidates in the process.

Like father, like daughter on the campaign trail?

And if Diosdado Macapagal's article of faith sounds familiar, it is because it is a creed perennially echoed by his daughter: Always do what is right, and do your best. God will take care of the rest.

Poll campaigners form text brigades

From page A1

political weapon.

President Macapagal-Arroyo's camp knows its power. So do the campaign strategists of her rivals.

Raymond Burgos does not leave home without his two mobile phones.

As media chief and campaign strategist for opposition presidential candidate Sen. Panfilo Lacson, Burgos uses his handsets to compose and send campaign propaganda through the SMS (short message service) or text messaging—the cheapest and most popular form of spreading information ahead of the May 10 polls.

"It is the fastest way to relay messages to our supporters. We can also relay our internal propaganda needs through texting and it is cheaper," Burgos told AFP at Lacson's campaign headquarters in Makati City.

Elsewhere in Manila, Maricar Quiambao's fingers hover over the computer keyboard as she prepares to compose a message to Filipino voters.

"Don't vote for FPJ," she says, laughing mischievously at her slight against movie star turned presidential front-runner Fernando Poe Jr.

Quiambao, a campaign adviser to politicians linked to the President, is testing software to send political text messages to thousands of mobile telephones simultaneously.

By the time Filipinos go to the polls on May 10 to elect a president and 17,000 other officials across the archipelago, many mobile phone owners will have received tens of thousands of messages aimed at influencing their decisions at the polling booth.

Most will be harmless jokes knocking down a candidate, but others will be potentially damaging rumors that could swing the vote in a close race.

Industry estimates show about 22 million of the 84 million Filipinos own cell phones, the majority of them electronically savvy youths who comprise a large portion of the electorate.

Mobile phone owners send an average of 10 to 15 text messages a day, and receive more than twice that number—from simple greetings to loved ones and bawdy jokes to movie events and news alerts.

At one peso per message, SMS is a cheaper alternative to traditional campaign materials like brochures, caps and printed shirts that could run into the millions. It also has wider reach—a finance department official estimates that 150 million text messages circulate daily in the Philippines, making it a world leader.

Text messaging has become such a lucrative revenue source that the government is reviving a proposal to impose an excise tax on text messages, the finance official said. *(See related story in Business, Page B1.)*

The heavy text traffic has made mobile operators Smart Communications Inc., Globe Telecom Inc. and Pilipino Telephone Corp. some of the strongest companies in an underperforming economy.

"It's now an effective conveyor of black propaganda," says Sen. Edgardo Angara, president of Poe's Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino party, the main opposition bloc.

Why text messaging has caught on so rapidly in the Southeast Asian nation is the subject of some debate.

Some say Filipinos are shy and appreciate the relative anonymity of texting. Others say conventions such as inquiring after the health of one another's families before starting to chat verbally has made SMS an attractive time-saver.

Certainly, money is a factor. Sending a message can cost as little as half a peso, an affordable option in a country where the minimum wage in the capital is just P280 a day.

It is also a cheap way to spread propaganda.

Send a message to campaign members who have been instructed to forward it to friends and supporters. Within hours, thousands of mobile phones are bleeping.

"This is the first presidential campaign where cellular phones are playing a major role," Burgos said, his phones constantly beeping in the middle of the interview.

"We saw that it could be an effective tool. We are now really maximizing this."

The Lacson camp has a "text brigade" composed of volunteers whose only job is to spread calendars and news about the candidate through SMS and block or counter negative publicity.

They work behind the scenes independently and use highly advanced software puchased from Hong Kong that could spread more than 100 text messages in a minute, Burgos said. ***Reports from Reuters and AFP***

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VENDORS' CLAMOR

PNP out; LGU in

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

IF THE vendors will have the final say, they would prefer to have the local government units rather than the police be entrusted with the job of clearing the streets of illegal vendors.

Metro Manila Vendors' Alliance (MMVA) president Rudy Ladiao yesterday told a press conference that they were rejecting the proposal of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority for the Philippine National Police to take over the job.

The MMDA made the proposal after announcing last week that it was backing out of the anti-sidewalk vending operations in Metro Manila.

MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando said the decision was made to prevent his men from further injuries or death inflicted by displaced vendors who, he claimed, were becoming more violent.

The vendors said that giving back the implementation of sidewalk clearing operation to the police would lead to more suffering for vendors as some policemen could abuse their authority again by extorting money.

The group also questioned why the police should takeover when "vendors are not criminals."

National Capital Region Police Office Director Ricardo De Leon earlier said the police were ready to take over.

Asked about fears of abuse, he said the NCRPO would not tolerate erring policemen, and vendors could report any violation to Patrol 117.

Flora Santos, who organized the MMVA, said the local governments are in a better position to address the concerns of vendors since they have the development plans and resources to implement the organized vending programs.

The group also asked Fernando to pay for all the goods they confiscated from, and all the suffering they have caused the sidewalk vendors in the two years of sidewalk clearing operations.

The vendors also proposed to have "alternative vending sites," where the vendors are willing to pay for official permits, like the one being implemented in some areas in Quezon City.

On March 27, the group will also have a vendors' summit where they would ask interested candidates to sign a covenant with the vendors.

MMDA lends support to 'anti-kotong' drive

By Margaux Ortiz

AFTER giving up its sidewalk clearing operations, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority is refocusing its energies on exposing corruption in the streets.

MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando yesterday said that in partnership with the Department of Interior and Local Government and the Department of Transportation and Communication, the agency will deploy Oplan Kotong teams all over Metro Manila to keep an eye on corrupt policemen and traffic enforcers.

Fernando said in his weekly radio program on dzBB that the composite teams made up of professional law enforcers will be able to accomplish what the MMDA clearing operations team achieved in the past two years.

"By eventually eradicating *kotong* (bribery), illegal vendors would cease to exist from the streets because this project will do away with their powerful protectors," Fernando said.

The MMDA chair also stressed that they decided to hand over the anti-sidewalk vending operations because the illegal hawkers were getting violent.

Fernando said the upcoming elections might have something to do with the vendors' renewed tenacity.

METROBRIEFS

One in nine

MANILA policemen searching for four men involved in a jeepney robbery last week stumbled upon one of the suspects when they brought nine suspects to the Western Police District headquarters yesterday for questioning. A female witness who joined the police team identified one of the suspects, Rodolfo Sacramento, as among those who held up a Pier-bound jeepney on March 16. WPD Homicide Section Chief Alex Yanquiling said the witness saw Sacramento, 28, and his companions, armed with knives, board the jeepney in Tondo. They then seized the bags of passengers, and shoved one of the passengers out of the jeepney. The victim, Avelino Guilhang, died when his head hit the pavement first. But Sacramento denied he was part of the group that staged the holdup. The police said they would file charges against him. *Leila Salaverria*

Scavenger affair

IT WAS scavenger versus scavenger the other day near a dump site in Tondo, Manila. But a turf war it was not. Rather, police tagged it as a crime of passion, one that was spurred by a fight over a woman. Alfredo Culintabo, 35, of Temporary Housing, Balut, Tondo, allegedly killed his neighbor, Armando Rivera, 33, on Saturday. Culintabo claimed he was merely defending his wife. He told police that Rivera, who was then drinking, tried to grab his wife when they passed by him at around 1 p.m. The two men got into a heated argument. Culintabo then took hold of a knife that was on top of a table nearby and stabbed Rivera on the chest. He was rushed to a hospital but did not reach it alive. Culintabo fled but surrendered to the police later that day. *Leila Salaverria*

Seafarers' forum set

A ROUND table discussion on laws and policies that affect seafarers and how to choose the right candidates responsive to their needs will be held on March 24, 1 to 5 p.m., at the Pagoda Seafarers House on 844 Interior Gonzalo Puyat St., Quiapo, Manila. Titled "Bakit Problema ni Juan Seaman ang Trabaho ni Pedro Mambabatas?", the forum will have seafarers and migrant groups presenting their insights on current laws and policies that contribute to maritime disasters like the recent SuperFerry 14 tragedy. For details, call the International Seafarers Action Center (ISAC), at 920-7433, or email info@isac.org.ph.

Women's Month

THE CITY of Las Piñas, through the efforts of Sen. Manny and Rep. Cynthia Villar and the city's first lady, Mel Aguilar, has kicked off the celebration of Women's Month through a free medical mission at the Las Piñas Integrated District Hospital. Women from the city and other nearby cities flocked the hospital for a free pap smear and breast examination.

Tamara, 3, needs your help

HERE'S your chance to help someone.

The parents of Tamara Isobel Sabado, 3, are appealing to good Samaritans and donors to help their child cope with leukemia.

Tam, as she is fondly called, was diagnosed last December to be suffering from the disease.

Tam is currently on her third session of chemotherapy. She has been in and out of hospitals and the side effects of chemotherapy are now evident, according to her mother, Joyce G. Sabado.

Tam's thick hair has begun to fall and she's more prone to infections than ever, Mrs. Sabado said.

The treatment sessions have been costing Tam's family so much. They need donors to help them pay for Tam's treatment sessions.

Tam's doctors have also suggested that Tam be operated on and inserted with a portable catheter to allow ready access for infusion of drugs, blood cells and removal of blood samples.

Donors may call the family at 374-3817 and/or cell phone numbers 0917-4204837 or 0916-3234205. Or send the donation to their house at #1 Lilac St., Roxas District, Quezon City.

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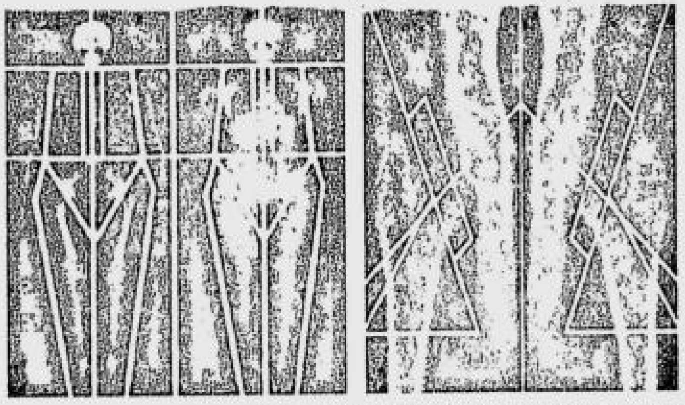

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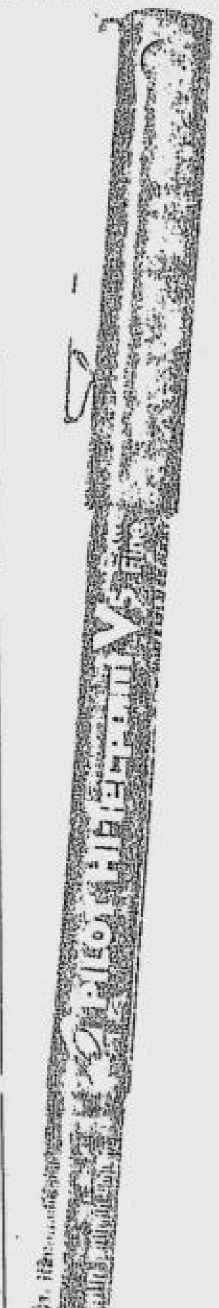

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METRO

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Editor **Abelardo S. Ulanday**

Malacañang pushes ID for Muslims

THE GOVERNMENT of President Macapagal-Arroyo has endorsed a program requiring Muslims in Metro Manila to carry identification cards to help thwart terrorist attacks in the metropolis.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye told RMN radio that the ID system for Muslims was a "good initiative."

Bunye noted that the suggestion requiring residents of Islamic communities in Metro Manila came from Muslim leaders themselves.

Thirty leaders of Muslim communities in Metro Manila volunteered to adopt an ID system for residents within their jurisdictions to help the government go after terrorists and criminals hiding among them.

The ID system is expected to take effect this week.

"This is a big help to our peace and order campaign when communities themselves implement their own ID system," Bunye said.

He added, "If coordinated with authorities, communities can monitor the movement of newcomers in their areas."

Muslim leaders volunteered to issue IDs to their members in an effort to disprove belief that they had anything to do with terrorists.

They also decried the mind-set that associated them with lawless elements. *Gil Cabacungan*

PISTON HEAD'S BELIEF

'Fare hike delay to save GMA bid'

MMDA → BERDUGO
PNP → KOTONG
PAREHONG PAHIRAP SA VENDORS!

WITH BF OUT

Leaders of the Metro Manila Vendors Alliance oppose plans to let the police take over the control and management of hawkers after the MMDA quit the task. See story on Page 23. RUDY ESPERAS

By Edson Tandoc Jr.

THE GOVERNMENT is only delaying the granting of a fare increase to help save the candidacy of President Macapagal-Arroyo, the leader of a big jeepney group has said.

Mar Garvida, president of the Pagkakaisa ng mga Samahan ng Tsuper at Opereytor Nationwide (Piston), told the INQUIRER last week that the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board was trying to protect the image of the President to commuters.

He noted that an increase in fare could dismay the riding public and jeopardize the chances of Ms Macapagal, who is running for president.

"But they are forgetting the more than 300,000 drivers and our families. We are also voters," Garvida said.

Hike after polls

Garvida expressed belief that the LTFRB would only grant a hike in transport fares after the May elections.

With that, Piston would wait out the process set by LTFRB Chair Maria Elena Bautista before acting on their petition for a P1.50 fare increase.

Based on Bautista's procedure, the jeepney drivers would be asked to submit a petition paper on their demands on Thursday.

Vigor Mendoza, lawyer for some of the transport groups, said they would be ready to submit the groups' position paper by the first week of April.

The Office of the Solicitor General would then give its comment within 10 days. By the time the LTFRB decides on the issue, the elections would already be over.

18-YEAR 'WAR'

Palanan folk win battle vs truck firm

RESIDENTS of Arellano Avenue and Madras Street in Barangay Palanan, Makati City, can finally breathe easy after the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) denied with finality the motion for reconsideration of the ESC Trucking Service Corp., whose franchise was revoked last year for allegedly being a nuisance to the community.

The LTFRB cancelled the firm's Certificate of Public Convenience (CPC), which it needs to operate.

For 18 years, Palanan residents have sought the transfer of the ESC's garage from the 300-square meter lot at 4637 Arellano Avenue, which it uses as a garage and repair shop.

Residents said the trucks polluted the air and the surroundings of their neighborhood.

Worse, the firm had also allegedly turned the streets into its own parking lot.

On Nov. 23, the LTFRB revoked the franchise of nine of ESC's trucks.

Its owner, Emmanuel Castillo, appealed by arguing that the LTFRB overlooked the real issues and that the agency committed a grave abuse of discretion. *Tina Santos*

Tanong ng Bayan
INQ TV
Ngayong Alas-10 Ng Gabi

FPJ, Ping unity: Maaayos pa ba?

Kung tutuusin, kailangan nila ang isa't isa. Pero kung magsalita sila o ang kanilang mga tagapagsalita, parang sila ang mag-kaaway. May pag-asa pa bang magkaisang-puwersa sina FPJ at Ping? May papel bang gagampanan ang Iglesia ni Cristo sa unification talks?
Ang sagot,
ngayong alas-10 ng gabi, sa InqTV on ABC-5.

ABC

MMDA to arrest trip-cutters

By Margaux Ortiz

COMPLETE your trips or face arrest.

Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando yesterday issued this warning against bus drivers who cut trips, especially on Edsa.

Fernando said many buses were not plying their entire routes and were instead cutting short their trips to be able to pick up passengers in crowded areas like Cubao.

He said that aside from being a nuisance, the buses also cause heavy traffic by waiting too long for passengers in one area.

"These bus drivers are getting used to breaking the law," Fernando said.

Fernando stressed that buses caught cutting trips will immediately be impounded without question.

He also said the erring drivers and operators would be subjected to an investigation.

Fernando noted that most of the violators were colorum buses with fake papers and fake plates.

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BASKETBALL: NBA Greatest Games - Jazz vs Sonics, Game 5, 1996 Western Finals; 8 a.m.; Solar Sports - Utah's Mailman tries to outmuscle and outhustle Seattle's Reignman in this pivotal encounter.
NBA - Bucks vs Lakers; 10:30 a.m. (r-10:30 a.m.); Solar Sports; Rockets vs Kings; 8 p.m.; IBC 13 - Surprising Milwaukee hopes to pull the rug on Los Angeles while Houston tries to soar against Sacramento.
US NCAA - Duke vs Virginia; 6 p.m.; NCAA Tournament Second Round, 8 p.m.; Solar Sports - Catch the future NBA stars display their skills on the hardwood.

SPORTS TV
Compiled by L. Manguiat

MONDAY,
MARCH 22, 2004

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

A25

SPORTS

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Lascuña fires 68, rules TCC by 2

By **Musong Castillo**, *Contributor*

CANLUBANG, Laguna—Playing with a busted driver and armed with the resolve that only champions have, Antonio Lascuña yesterday clawed back from two strokes down in the final nine holes to rule The Country Club Invitational by two strokes over a game Angelo Que.

The 33-year-old Davaoeño gunned down four birdies in the first seven holes coming home for a final 2-under-par 68 and won P1.1 million with a 276 total, four-under over the tough The Country Club layout.

LASCUÑA

The dusky, ever-smiling Lascuña secured the biggest victory of his career despite a bogey on the 17th as Que, who churned out a third straight sub-par effort—a 69—failed to keep in step when it mattered most.

Cookie La'O, the only other player in the small, select field to contend for the championship, finished with a 71 after a birdie-birdie start and was third at 281.

Que won P605,000, while La'O picked up P385,000 from the P3.86-million pot.

"I just kept thinking that I have the game that can win this tournament," said the American Eye Center-backed Lascuña in Filipino. "I was never rattled, even after falling out of the lead. You can't afford to think negatively if you want to win."

Que, a two-year pro who set a course record 66 on the par 70-shortened course in the third round, grabbed the lead by two strokes at the turn with a 2-under 33 as Lascuña bogeyed the seventh and ninth for a 36.

But Lascuña, who tied for second with Benjie Magada here last year, stepped up his game with precision iron play on the back nine, ramming home birdies on the 11th, 12th, 14th and 16th to wrest the lead for good.

A 14-foot birdie set up by a 3 iron on the 232-yard par-3 11th ignited Lascuña's sizzling finish. He pitched to four feet on No. 12, had a "gimme" bird on No. 14 and knocked in a 16-footer on No. 16 to go three up on Que.

With his main rival making no threatening move, Lascuña bogeyed the 17th from the trap to pave the way for the final two-stroke margin.

Que's downfall started on the 10th when he took a bogey going from rough to trap. He was still in contention until he missed a four-foot birdie putt on the No. 14 to trail by two.

La'O, who started with three consecutive 70s, birdied Nos. 1 and 2 to tie Que for second place at 2-under.

But the rally was short-lived. He three-putted from the fringe of the par-3 third and then missed the apron from just about 80 yards on No. 5 to drop back to even.

It was a Lascuña-Que duel from there.

Que, who had tied Lascuna with a birdie on No. 4, wrested solo leadership three holes later when Lascuna missed the fairway and the green for a bogey.

Lascuña then found himself down by two when his two-footer for par rimmed out.

Marciano Pucay and veteran Danny Zarate tied for fourth at 288 after a 71 and a 73. Both went home with P247,500.

Ramil Bisera (70) was sixth with a 289 total, while Robert Pactolerin rallied with a 69 and finished seventh at 290. Elmer Salvador (73), Magada (71), Dan Cruz (70) and Eddie Bagtas (70) finished tied for eighth with 291 totals.

The final scores:

276—A.Lascuña 71-67-70-68; 278—A.Que 76-67-66-69; 281-C.LaO 70-70-70-71; 288—M.Pucay 74-72-69-73, D.Zarate 73-72-72-71; 289-R.Bisera 70-79-70-70; 290-Rob.Pactolerin 75-74-72-69; 291—E. Salvador 73-76-69-73, B. Magada 71-74-75-71, D. Cruz 75-75-71-70; 292—M.Dizon 76-70-74-72, R. Pagunsan 75-73-73-71; 294—R. Cabajar 73-77-72-72; 295—Rn.Pactolerin 77-73-70-75, J. Delariarte 71-75-74-75, R. Cuello 77-70-77-71, M. Dumandan (a) 76-71-77-71.

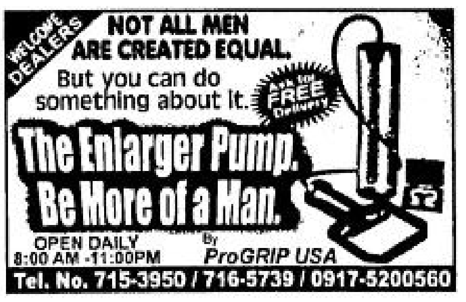
3 RP boxers 'knocked out' by computer

GUANGZHOU—A pall of gloom descended on the RP Alaxan FR Boxing Team Saturday night as three of its vaunted pugs lost their first round matches in the second Asian qualifying tournament for the Athens Olympics.

Light flyweight Harry Tañamor was the first to go as South Korean Gu Seung Huek absorbed ev-

3 RP/ A26

Alaska downs Talk 'N Text /A26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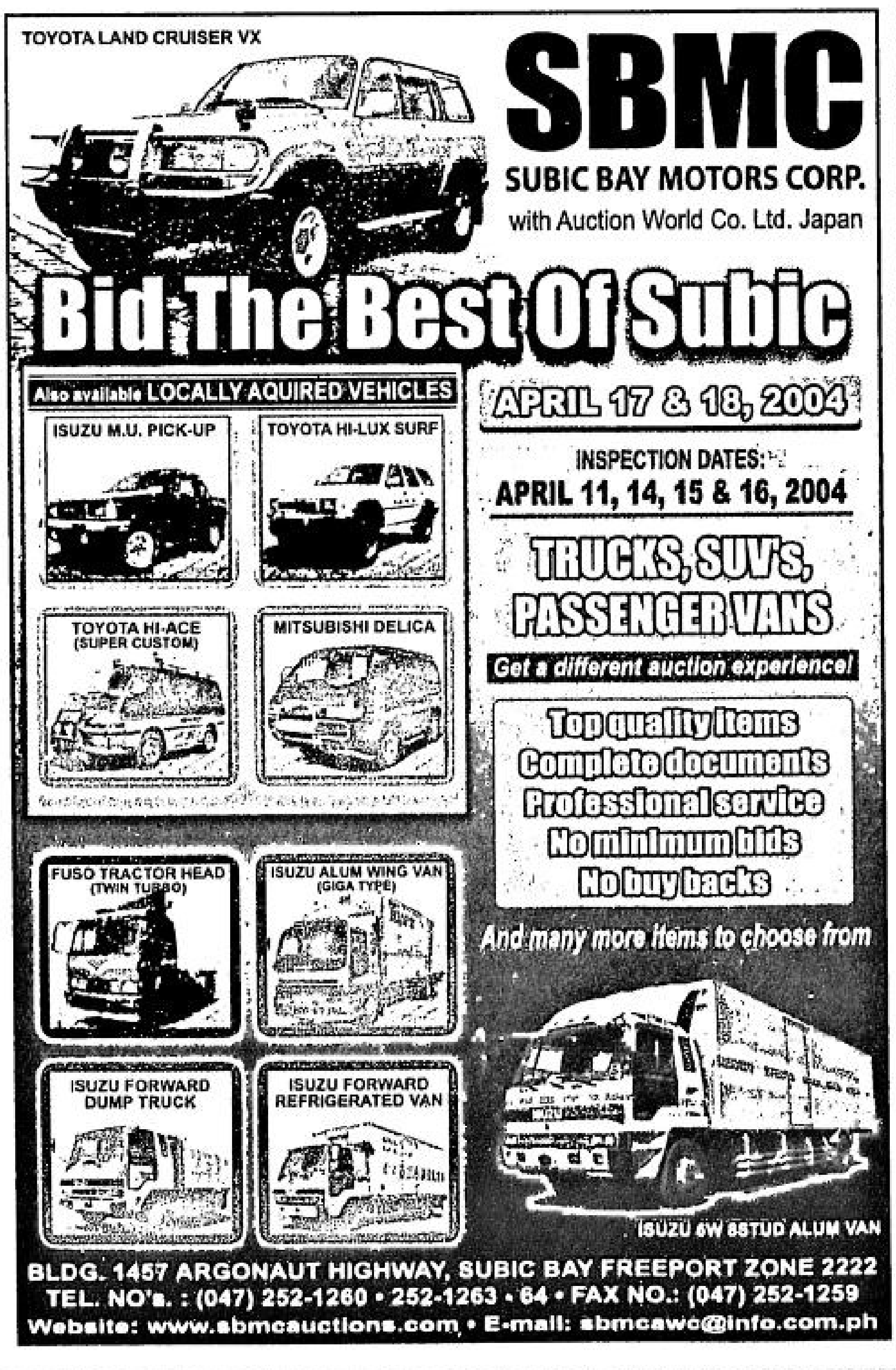
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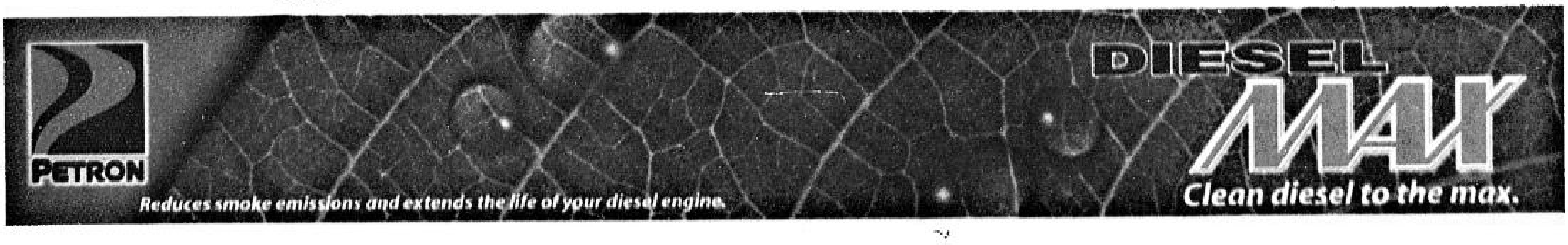
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Siot humbled but unbowed by poor start

IT WASN'T just the time yet to show them all up.

And Barangay Ginebra Kings mentor Bethune "Siot" Tanquincen had no qualms admitting his shortcomings in his debut for the league's most popular ball club—a 99-90 loss to Red Bull Barako Saturday.

"Siguro (Maybe)I didn't give them (players) enough reminders on the things that we should or could have done," he said during a post-game interview. "A big part of the result is my inability to prepare them properly," he added.

It could have also been a perfect opportunity for the Kings to finally break its losing spell at the Ynares Center. Ginebra has lost all of its past five games in Antipolo since winning its last on Oct. 30, 2002 against Sta. Lucia.

The Kings struggled trying to keep up with Red Bull's tough offense. After the first half, Ginebra could produce nothing in the 3-point area compared to Red Bull's 58.3 percent. Red Bull even went to lead by 18 points early in the third period.

Tanquincen still was proud of his boys' never-say-die display. "They gave all their effort.

You can't ask anything more from them," he said. He particularly described the players as "receptive" as far as making adjustments is concerned.

Plus, he is also open to consulting with the team's former coach Allan Caidic. "He's a big help to me," he said.

Doing the head coach's work is not at all alien to Tanquincen. He served as interim head coach of the San Miguel Beermen in the 2002 Commissioner's and Governor's Cup while Jong Uichico was tapped to coach the RP team in the Busan Asian Games. San Miguel placed third and fourth places, respectively.

"Hopefully I could bring back the running game of the team but at the same time keep the discipline and make it a top defending team as well," Tanquincen said.

Aces' tough D smothers Phone Pals

GAMES WEDNESDAY *(Araneta Coliseum)*
4:45 p.m.—Shell vs Coca-Cola
7:10 p.m.—Barangay Ginebra vs Sta. Lucia

By June Navarro

ALASKA threw an unforgiving defense at Randy Holcomb and Asi Taulava and the Aces humbled the Talk 'N Text Phone Pals, 90-73, last night in the Gran Matador PBA Fiesta Conference at the Araneta Coliseum.

"Awesome. Who would have thought we could beat Talk 'N Text by that margin? I guess we just played very well and they had an off-night," said Alaska coach Tim Cone.

It was purely a team effort as five Aces led by the peppery Mike Cortez finished in double figures while they bottled up Taulava and Holcomb in the paint no end.

Holcomb came up with 30 points and 15 rebounds but converted only 12 of 24 attempts from the field.

Hounded by Ali Peek throughout, Taulava had limited touches on the ball and made only six of 15 shots for 14 points, a figure way below his 24.8-point average in five games.

Cone, however, downplayed the Aces' solid, all-around performance.

"We played an outstanding defense and they missed a lot of gimmes," said Cone.

The Aces streaked to their fourth straight win for a 5-1 record while inflicting on the Phone Pals' their second defeat in six outings.

San Miguel Beer stretched its unbeaten run to six with a 94-89 decision over Purefoods in the second game.

First Game

ALASKA 90—Cortez 20, Peek 18, Young 16, Cablay 15, Alado 12, Duat 5, Thoss 2, Feihl 2, Franco 0, Wilson 0, Padilla 0.

TALK 'N TEXT 73—Holcomb 30, Taulava 14, Pablo 13, De Ocampo 8, Miller 6, Alapag 2, Ravena 0, Fran 0, Belano 0.

Quarters: 27-23, 49-40, 72-56, 90-73

YOUNG grabs possession over a fallen Holcomb. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Pacquiao begins 'hellish' training

THE ATHMOSPHERE is a complete turnaround from the hectic schedule he left behind which includes movie and endorsement shoots, party invitations, pool hall visits, and a little boxing.

PACQUIAO

A day after arriving in the United States from an exhaustive trip from the Philippines where he almost missed his flight last Friday evening, featherweight king Manny Pacquiao did not waste time and proceeded immediately to trainer Freddie Roach's Wild Card Gym in Los Angeles.

Pacquiao was warmly received at Roach's world-famous gym, and then started his rigorous training under the Trainer of the Year awardee on Saturday.

Under Roach, Pacquiao is to undergo a hellish five-week training camp that will prepare the Ring Magazine king for his May 8 duel with the WBA/IBF king Juan Manuel Marquez at the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas.

Pacquiao left the country last Friday evening on board a PAL flight that took him and his entourage—which included promoter Murad Muhammad and an HBO crew—to Los Angeles.

HBO will air the Pacquiao-Marquez showdown, including the chief undercard battle between prospects Miguel Cotto and Juan "Pollo" Valenzuela.

The five-week training regimen would include sparring sessions against top Wild Card Gym boxers like Irish featherweight sensation Bernard Dunne and possibly against superbantamweight Israel "Magnifico" Vazquez, who is slated to vie for Pacquiao's vacated IBF 122-lb title against Venezuelan Jose Luis Valbuena on March 25. *Salven L. Lagumbay*

Manila mismatch: CCP knocks out HBO

BARE EYE

Recab Trinidad

PRAY this is not a bad omen.

Before Manny Pacquiao could leave on Friday for his mission to knock out (in 3 rounds, *daw*) double world featherweight champ Juan Manuel Marquez of Mexico, a team working for Pacquiao's successful US campaign got stopped in Manila.

Yes, the HBO team suffered a nasty knockout at the hands of an Imelda Marcos protégé while filming footages of Pacquiao here.

By protégé, we mean the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP), which was built under the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos.

It was a dirty KO. Take it from one who had witnessed the one-sided give-and-take:

After spending almost the whole of Tuesday looking for a good, postcard angle of the Manila skyline, HBO producer Brook Silva-Braga, with a team hurriedly shipped in from Tokyo, proceeded to the CCP walk off the east edge of the Manila Yacht Club on Roxas Boulevard.

It was a perfect background, one that would certainly project a handsome portrait of Manila for the whole world to admire.

***

The sun had started to set, so the HBO team wasted no time. The sound, light equipment, together with the main camera, each handled by a separate expert, were set up for the grand shoot.

Pacquiao meanwhile was at the nearby Bayview Park Hotel resting with his wife.

The idea was to first do some interviews, with plain fans and so-called experts, before calling in the star of the shoot.

All set. But just after Braga, New York-based HBO producer for sports, had ordered the camera to roll, a lean, dark-skinned security guard, natty in blue-and-white uniform, broke into the scene to inquire if the group had any right to shoot on CCP grounds.

The guard, firm and erect, was clasping a walkie talkie close to his mouth.

Naturally, members of the HBO team stuttered. They have been all over the world and it was the first time they had been made to explain why they had to do their thing.

Did they have any permit, the guard asked.

Told that there was none, the guard, a certain SG Baladad, or was it Balatbat, ordered the group to go walk to the CCP office and ask permission.

***

But HBO was not taking footage of any CCP area or property, it was explained, what they needed was just a handsome slice of the skyline.

No way, the guard snorted.

HBO was there to help sell the Philippines, it was explained, not to make any profit.

Go to the CCP office and explain, the guard ordered.

When the HBO team started to feel doomed, international correspondent Zeny Silva, wife of the late Maning Silva, walked in to intercede for the visitors.

Could they (HBO) be allowed to proceed shooting while she walked to the CCP office to seek permission, Zeny Silva implored.

Don't shoot, the guard insisted.

But it's getting late, light is of the essence, Zeny explained before offering to go to the far-off CCP office as ordered by the mighty guard.

You start shooting when you have the permit, the guard demanded. Period.

***

Feeling helpless, HBO threw in the towel. Mismatch. The team packed up quietly.

Needless to say, it would've been a perfect shoot because HBO wholeheartedly believed that the selling of Pacquiao was also the selling of the Philippines (to the world).

But the security guard also had a duty to perform.

Oh, how we wished we could have dozens and dozens of guards as strict, unbending as this dusky one. You know, to implement regulations out in our wild, chaotic streets.

Of course, we no longer asked the guard why he had to discriminate on the well-meaning HBO team, while at the same time allowing lovers of all shapes and ages along the CCP walk to resort to sundown obscenities under his nose.

Or was he there to guard and hide bigger CCP obscenities?

On the way out, one foreigner wondered; "Is the Philippines still under a dictatorship?"

***

(A newspaperman from Cebu texted to ask why the PSC regional director in the Visayas is "always out of office campaigning for his Edsa party list."….As promised, here are salient portions of a letter sent in by a certain Pedro Pandoy: "After the Vietnam SEA Games, was there an accounting of expenses? How much did each NSA receive for training, uniforms, travel, accommodation, allowances?…..In all international events here or abroad, PSC pays full for the accommodation and meals of athletes and officials. PSC gets the official receipt to form part of the liquidation. The big question is: who got the rebates? In practice, hotels give rebates for rooms not occupied due to overbooking or simply no-show. For this, hotels charge only one night. What about the cases of early check-out by officials or teams that have finished competitions? This has been the practice since PSC was born. Somebody in the PSC is raking in *mucho dinero*….Now the PSC is like a loose ball. Expenses are uncontrolled even when it does not have money. Deficit spending. No transparency. Not even COA can blow the whistle. PSC needs serious fiscal managers, planners. A timeout is timely.")

Hot Schumacher makes it 2 in row

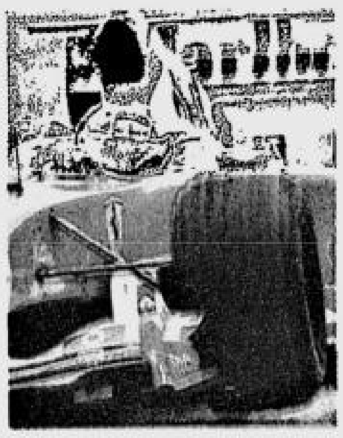
SEPANG, Malaysia—Michael Schumacher won his second consecutive race of the season Sunday, taking the Malaysian Grand Prix with his Ferrari again easily ahead of the field.

It was the 72nd career victory for the six-time world champion, finishing 5.0 seconds ahead of Juan-Pablo Montoya in a Williams-BMW, but slowing down markedly at the end.

BAR-Honda's Jenson Button of Britain was third, his first time on the podium, ending up 11.5 seconds behind Schumacher.

Rubens Barrichello ran fourth. The chance for another 1-2 Ferrari finish after the season-opening Australian Grand Prix evaporated on the second lap when Barrichello missed a turn and ran wide dropping into fourth.

Jarno Trulli was fifth in a Renault, and David Coulthard trailed sixth in a McLaren-Mercedes.



SCHUMACHER powers his car around the curve. AFP

Renault's rising star Fernando Alonso of Spain ended seventh, more than 1 minute behind, but a strong showing after starting in the last row. He wore Spanish flags on his helmet and uniform in honor of the victims of the March 11 terrorist bombings at Madrid. *AP*

3 RP boxers . . .

From page A25

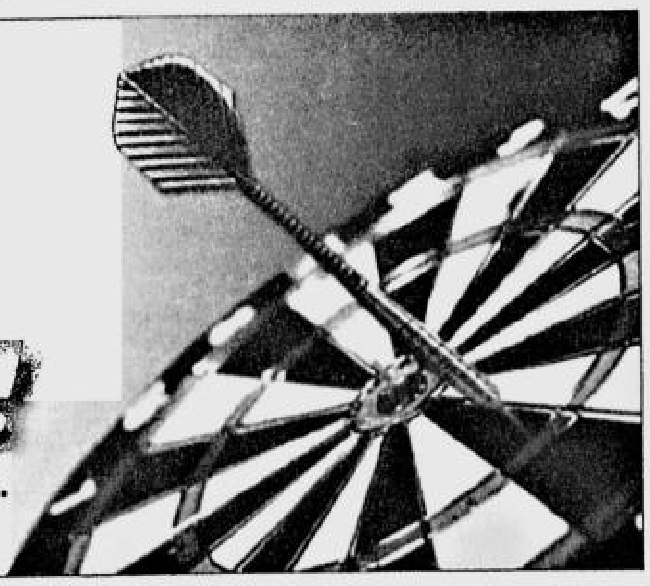
erything the Filipino dished out and still emerged a 27-21 winner to the consternation of the crowd at the Tianhe Gymnasium here.

The loss set the tone for what Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines president Manny Lopez declared as a "Black Saturday for boxing" as bantamweight Ferdie Gamo and lightweight Genebert Basadre suffered the same fate, their opponents getting unsolicited help from a "malfunctioning" scoring program acquired from Thailand.

Gamo lost to Serikbaye of Kazakhstan, 23-27, while Basadre lost to Pichai Sayate of Thailand, 25-30.

No less than AIBA president Prof. Anwar Chowdhry discovered the faulty program later in the night during the middleweight bout between Pakistan's Hamed Ali Khan and Sonchai Chemlong of Thailand.

The Pakistani was leading, 17-12, with only five seconds to go but when Chowdhry looked at the scoring monitor, the score suddenly became even at 17-17.



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Super GM sees 4-way title clash

TAGAYTAY CITY —Super Grandmaster Pavel Kotsur predicts a four-way fight for the Dubai Cup which is up for grabs in the 14th Asian Cities Chess Championship that got under way Sunday at the Tagaytay International Convention Center here.

"It is very tough to say who will win but I think it will be among us, China, the Indonesian team led by GM Utut Adianto and the Philippine team bannered by your three Filipino GMs," said the board 1 player of defending champion Pavlodar of Kazakhstan.

Asked about their chances of retaining the Dubai Cup, Kotsur, the highest-rated player in this tournament with an ELO rating of 2569, said the Kazakhs "have very good chances but you know in chess, anything can happen."

Besides Kotsur, the Pavlodar squad, which is seeded No. 2, is composed of GM Irzhanov Ruslan (2501), International Masters Egorov Evgeni (2381) and Ibraev Nurlan (2487) and GM Serik Temirbaev (2459).

Getting the top seed is Guangzhou of China led by IM Liang Chong, who has the highest rating of 2526 among the team, GMs Li Shilong (2525) and Liang Jingrong (2467), IM Yu Shaoteng (2477) and Fide Master Chen De (2361).

Host Tagaytay City is the No. 3 seed in the chessfest organized by the National Chess Federation of the Philippines and the Tagaytay government with support from the Philippine Sports Commission, Department of Interior and Local Government, Department of Tourism, Philippine Sports Commission, Manila Sports Council and STI.

Making the opening ceremonial moves at the inaugurual rites were World Chess Federation lifetime honorary president Florencio Campomanes, Tagaytay City Mayor Francis N. Tolentino and PSC chair Eric Buhain.

"By staging the Asian Cities we hope to place Tagaytay in the world sports map and generate tourist income for our government," Mayor Tolentino said.

Veteran Eugene Torre, Asia's first GM, (2521) will play board 1 for the hosts while he is backed up by fellow GMs Joey Antonio (2523), Bong Villamayor (2469) and IMs Ronald Dableo (2426) and Jayson Gonzales (2403).

"With our three GMs, I can say our chances are bright. But there are other tough teams in this tournament so it's hard to tell how we will fare," said Tagaytay team captain Chris Mangulabnan.

Tagaytay was scheduled to play Samarinda of Indonesia, the No.12 seed, in the opening round of the 9-round Swiss system event.

Water interruption in portions of Makati and Manila due to water improvement project

Manila Water announced it will conduct valve insertion activities in Makati and a cut and plug work on a large pipeline in Manila in order to upgrade and improve water distribution. These water improvement activities will result in a temporary water service interruption for some areas.

The water cutoff will be from 10:00 p.m., Monday, March 22, 2004, up to 12:00 noon, Tuesday, March 23, 2004.

Affected Areas are:

Makati: Guadalupe Nuevo, Guadalupe Viejo, Cembo, South Cembo, Pitugo, Pinagkaisahan, Palm Village, Urdaneta, Bel-Air 1-4, Salcedo Village, Legaspi Village, San Lorenzo, Pio Del Pilar, Upper Poblacion and Makati Central Business District.

Manila: San Andres and Sta. Ana

Residents are advised to store enough water prior to the schedule of the water interruption.

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Globe backs Sta. Elena Cup golf tilt

WITH Globe Telecoms coming in as a major sponsor, the 220 participating teams in the eighth Sta. Elena Cup, the member-guest invitational tournament of the multiawarded Sta. Elena Golf Club, are in for an exciting and fun-filled week of competition.

MANOTOC

Globe's entry boosts the very exclusive sponsorship roster of the event that counts just five companies. These are Royal Carribean International, Northwest International Airlines, Toyota Motors Philippines and Mizuno/Master Sports.

Heading the entries for the 36-hole tourney slated for March 25-28 is the team of Tommy Manotoc and Bones Floro. Manotoc is actually gunning for another major amateur plum after a series of superb performances of late that had seen him clinch the PAL Interclub seniors individual crown.

Last month, Manotoc made history with OV Espiritu in the Mango Tee of Alabang when they won both the low gross and low net plums.

The Sta. Elena Cup kicks off with the pre-tournament cocktails tomorrow. One of the watches donated by Omega will be raffled off.

More Omega watches will be given away during the tournament's awarding rites on Sunday, March 28.

A Toyota Camry is the hole-in-one prize.

Sta. Elena general manager Junie Ledesma said that a big portion of the Sta. Elena Cup proceeds will go to the employees tipping fund yearly. The club is one of a few in the country that prohibits its service workforce from receiving tips.

Sta. Elena boasts of an all-weather course that was recently adjudged as the best course in the Philippines and the second best in the region by the prestigious Asia Golf Magazine.

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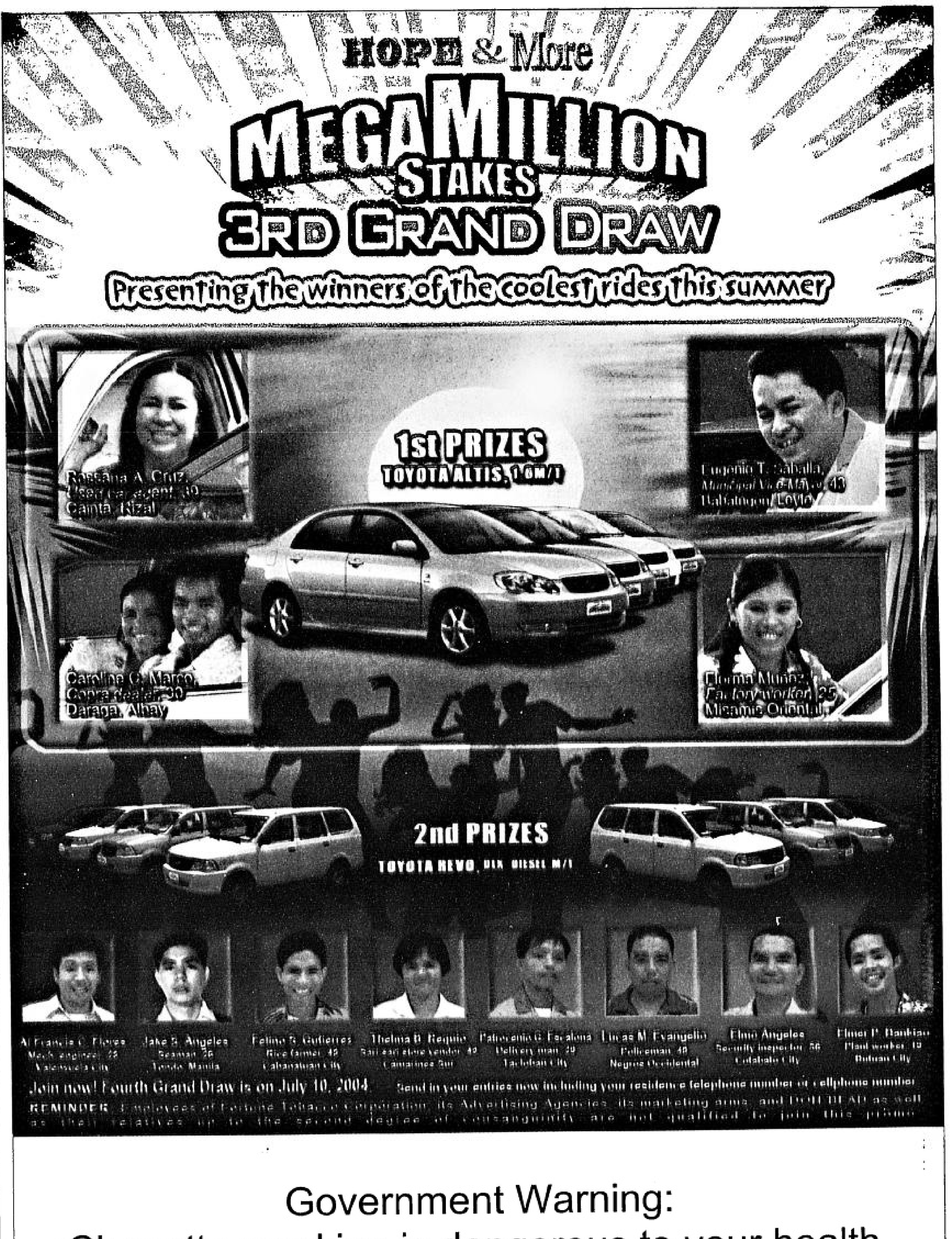
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Track ready for FIM Int'l motocross

AGUILAR vows to give it his best shot. PDI PHOTO

ALL IS set for the 2004 FIM Puerto Princesa City International Motocross Championships-Motocross Masters of Asia with the four-hectare track that will test the riders declared ready to host the March 28 event.

FIM Asian Motocross president Macky Carapiet recently conducted an ocular inspection of the venue and was delighted over the final preparations done on the track adjacent to the city hall.

"I commend Mayor Edward Hagedorn and his constituents for a job well done," said Carapiet. "Their efforts in the past four months have not gone for naught for they were able to accomplish their mission of transforming their local moto track in accordance with FIM standards," he added.

Race officials started to enforce yesterday the "no on-site practice" rule to prevent local riders from gaining the undue advantage of familiarity with the track over visiting competitors.

The event is sponsored by the City of Puerto Princesa, Dusit Hotel Nikko, The Legend Hotel-Palawan, Philippine Airlines, Bridgestone, Cebu Pacific, What's On & Expat, Oakley, Polysport, Highland Products, Yehey.com, ABC-5's Speed, Negros Navigation, www.motorcyclephilippines.com, the Philippine Sports Commission and the Tourism department.

Thousands are expected to troop to the site to witness defending champions Glenn Aguilar and Kenneth San Andres as well as local motocross heroes and Bebet de la Cruz, Ernie Leongson and Jovie Saulog in action against the top national riders of 10 Asia Pacific nations in the 125-cc event.

Aguilar, revved up by his big win two Sundays ago, hopes to buck the odds in the tough field that includes Japanese factory rider Tadakazu Ohtsuka and Indonesian national champion Aep Dadang.

Joining the title quest are four other Asian champions—China's Xu Wenmin, Thailand's Chakrit Rungsiuwan, Malaysia's Haslizam and India's Chika Vijayakumar.

San Andres, the National Junior Rider of the Year, will have his hands full against Guamanian junior riders Sean Lipanovich and Shane Morrison in the junior 80-cc division. Also heading the Pee Wee 50-cc class is Cin Toves from Guam.

"I will give it my best shot. I want to win this round. The pressure's on me but I'm physically and mentally ready for the challenge," said Aguilar.

The overall winner in this centerpiece division will be awarded the Mayor Edward Hagedorn Cup.

The weekend promises to be a real treat for fans with Namssa simultaneously holding Round 4 of the national motocross series. The two-day affair is expected to draw over 100 participants vying for trophies and cash in 14 categories.

The event also showcases Puerto Princesa and the country to the world through sports tourism. The races will be covered by the ESPN and Star TV networks and shown to over 400 million viewers worldwide.

The other legs will be staged in Guam, Malaysia, Macau, Singapore, United Arab Emirates and India.

For details on the FIM moto event, call Namssa at 0917-8992363.

Fat 74 ends Tiger's date with history

WOODS shows his frustration after overshooting the fourth green. AP

ORLANDO, Florida—Tiger Woods will have to make history some other time—and some other place.

His bid to become the first player to win the same event five straight years fizzled Saturday at the Bay Hill Invitational when he stumbled to a 2-over 74 and fell more than a dozen shots behind the leaders.

Stuart Appleby zoomed into the lead of the Bay Hill Invitational with four straight birdies, then pulled away from Chad Campbell on the back nine to take command with a 6-under 66.

Appleby, who won the season-opening Mercedes Championships at Kapalua, was at 16-under 200 and had a four-shot lead over Campbell (70).

Darren Clarke tried to keep pace, but he went from the bunker into the water on the 13th hole and made double bogey, then bogeyed the last two holes for a 74.

Clarke was at 208 in a large group that included John Daly, who overcame two double bogeys to shoot a 2-under 70.

"Hey, I tried my best," Woods said. "It's not going to happen, but hopefully I can play well next week and get it going for Augusta. If I can win that one, I think that will be a little bit bigger than this one."

Woods builds his career around the majors, although there was a big buzz at Bay Hill about his chances of owning the tournament run by Arnold Palmer.

And it looked as if Woods was on track when he opened with a 67, one shot off the lead. He was never the same after that.

On Friday, he hit his second tee shot out of bounds to take double bogey, and never recovered in a round of 74. His hopes in the third round ended just as quickly.

First, Woods flubbed a chip out of the rough on No. 2 and had to make a 10-foot putt just to escape the bogey. Then, he tried to take off a chunk of the lake on the sixth, only to see his drive come about 3 feet short of land. He had to hit his third shot from the tee, hit another poor chip and made double bogey.

"I was trying to hit a high fade, and instead I hit a draw," Woods said. "When I do it right, it's great." *AP*

Gabi title defense moved

THE SCHEDULED first defense of World Boxing Council (WBC) International flyweight champ Diosdado "Prince" Gabi has been moved to April 30 at the University of Baguio Gym in Baguio City.

Soc Piñol, who promotes the slick-punching Gabi, informed this writer of the postponement from the original April 17 play date.

Gabi will defend his title against undefeated Thai pug Duangpetch Nakornthong-Parkvill in the 12-round main event.

The Kidapawan City-based Gabi (24-2-1, with 19 KOs) is fresh off his victory over Randy Mangubat on Nov. 9 last year in Kidapawan City.

Now ranked No. 14 by the WBC and No. 12 by the International Boxing Federation, Gabi hopes to notch a win as a ticket to a planned stint at the Kronk Gym in the United States of legendary trainer Emmanuel Steward.

The Thai has a record of 24 wins, no loss, and 1 draw. *Salven L. Lagumbay*

Paro too tough for Macalibo

By Salven L. Lagumbay, *Contributor*

SHERWIN Paro, showing his old deadly form, won with a fourth-round technical decision over Franklin Macalibo Saturday night in the mainer of the Philippine Professional Boxing League at the Mandaluyong Elementary gym.

Paro used his vaunted jab and thunderous rights to completely befuddle Macalibo, knocking down the L&M Gym fighter late in the first round.

But an accidental headbutt in the second round reopened an old Paro cut around his right eye. Another headbutt in the fourth prompted the stoppage of the fight.

Referee Robert Macasil Jr. went to the scorecards where Paro was declared winner via scores of 30-26 by judges Alex Villacampa and Cris Odulio and 29-26 by the third judge, Narciso Martinez.

The win improved Paro's record to 13 wins with 9 KOs against 2 losses and moved him into the semifinals of the PPBL tournament next month.

"Sherwin moved so well tonight. He's back to his old deadly form," said Paro's manager, Marty Elorde.

Paro's trainer, Moray Quijano, said the injury is not that severe as he only applied "butterfly" bandage on Paro's cut.

"I will have him train right away to prepare for his next fight," Quijano said.

In the undercard, Roselito Campana won by unanimous decision over Allan Fuentes to also reach the semifinal round.

QC intervillage caging set April 3

THE LARGEST intervillage basketball tournament—the Alliance of Quezon City Homeowners Associations Inc. (AQCHAI)—will stage its ninth season on April 3 at the Tivoli Royal Country Club Gym.

The tournament is part of AQCHAI's annual Sagip Kabataan at Kapaligiran Project aimed at saving the youth from drug addiction and abuse and environmental protection.

The summer-long event is the biggest in the country with 65 teams representing 30 subdivisions competing for the title.

In line with the Sagip Kabataan at Kapaligiran project, organizers, led by AQCHAI Youth and Sports Committee chairman Danilo Mendoza and co-chair Jordan Tolentino, will also hold basketball clinics and drug-prevention seminars to be conducted before the event sponsored by Moby Hotdogs, Purefoods Hormel, Manila Bank, Royale Palace-Don Antonio, Stick-O, Nissan-Commonwealth, Pilipinas Palm Oil, Insular Assurance Life Company and Homeworks.

"This has been going on for the past nine years, and we're proud that we may have saved many youths from drugs by luring them into projects like sports and environmental protection," said Mendoza.

He said more teams are expected this time since subdivisions outside Quezon City have signified their intention to join the Sagip Kabataan at Kapaligiran project.

Games will be played Tuesdays to Sundays from 1 to 10 p.m. The Tivoli Royale Basketball court is being refurbished to conform to Fiba standards.

Tournament fee is P7,500. For inquiries, call AQCHAI (Marivic) at 931-3011, Danny Mendoza (0917-8384642) or Jordan Tolentino (0919-2704582).

SPORTSWATCH

Umadhay, Pilares lead advance of faves

BACOLOD—Marvin Umadhay blanked JP Chua, 6-0, 6-0, and Eladio Pilares edged John Ryan Dominguez, 6-4, 6-3, in the boys' 14-under division at the start of the 2004 Milo Junior Tennis Cup and Regional Workshop at the Negros Occidental Tennis Association courts here. Umadhay and Pilares towed Jovary Miravalles, a 6-1, 6-2 winner over Charles Imari Chua, and Christof Carmona, who ousted Wekon Tan, 6-1, 6-2, in the boys' 12-under class of the CTW-organized netfest celebrating the 40 years of Milo in the local market. The event is supported by Wilson balls, adidas and Sports Kids and sanctioned by the Philippine Tennis Association. In the preliminary round of the unisex 10-under bracket watched by tennis patron Dr. Severino Lacson, Pearl Derrama whitewashed Ivan Ysung, 6-0, 6-0.

Checkmate classes start tomorrow

MILO Checkmate, the country's first chess school with a formal scientific program, starts its early summer lessons tomorrow at five venues. The venues and time slots are: World Prep Learning Center in Loyola Heights, Quezon City (1:30-5 p.m.); Happy Nest Center, Pasig City (8-11:30 a.m.); 4F J&F Divino Building, 967 Aurora Blvd. near Anonas St., Quezon City (9 a.m.-1 p.m.); Jollibee-Greenhills Shopping Center (from 1:30-5 p.m.), and Rizal Memorial Complex (Badminton Building) (8-11:30 a.m.). The next set of classes begins on March 30 and ends on April 7 with four additional venues, namely, Notre Dame of Greater Manila Area in Caloocan City, St. Benedict College in Alabang, Robinsons Place near Fairview and Wiz Child Kindergarten in Retiro, Quezon City. Provincial classes in Regions 1 and 3 are slated on April 12-17 at Nepo Mall, Dagupaan City; Aringay School of Science and Trade and Technology, La Union; Divine Word College in Vigan; Colegio de Sta. Philomena in Pulilan, Bulacan; Garden Angels Integrated School in Balagtas; Araullo University, Cabanatuan; Central Luzon State University in Muñoz, Nueva Ecija, and Walter Mart in Plaridel. Open to chess enthusiasts 5 years old and above, enrollees can avail of the 10-percent discount by presenting 1 kg of Milo empty pack with SSC sticker. For inquiries, call the organizing Metropolitan Chess Club at 826-8560 and 0916-8521069.

KGB golf goes to Luisita Thursday

ONE of the keenly awaited tournaments of the Kapisanan ng mga Golfers sa Brodkast (KGB) will be held on Thursday at the exclusive Luisita Golf and Country Club in Tarlac, Tarlac. The 18-hole medal play tournament on the Robert Trent Jones-designed championship course is the first out-of-town venue for the broadcast golfers who started out the year with tournaments at Aguinaldo and Villamor. KGB members will be gunning for the overall monthly championship aside from signature KGB trophies in Class A, B, C and the Ladies and Guest divisions. The awards lunch will be highlighted by a raffle. Registration starts at 6:45 a.m. with the first flight teeing off at 7 a.m.

Ateneo de Zambo tourney set at MGC

THE ATENEO de Zamboanga University Metro Manila Alumni Association 3rd Golf Classic 2004 gets under way on April 16 at the Manila Golf Club in Forbes Park, Makati City. Alumni president Paulino Pe said the tournament aims to raise funds to support Ateneo de Zamboanga scholars in their advance studies at universities in Metro Manila. Interested parties may join the 18-hole fund-raiser event. During the awards rites, the newly elected alumni board members will be inducted into office by Zamboanga Rep. Celso Lobregat, Pe said. For inquiries, call Jimmy Panganiban at 0918-9002159 or lawyer Domingo Doroja at 0917-5285560 and Fred Suarez at 0919-5865644.

FVR AT SUMMIT POINT

Former President Fidel V. Ramos (second from right) leads other VIPs and celebrities at a recent fellowship golf tournament held at the Summit Point Golf and Country Club (SPGCC) in Lipa City. FVR and the special guests played with world-famous course designer Robert Trent Jones Jr., Summit Point project architect. Seated from left are lawyer Rodolfo de Leon, Joey Rufino, a guest, Ric Bautista and Ric Laudico. Second row, standing, left to right: Minoru Isagi, Kenjo Ogyu (partly hidden), Robert Yupangco, Marc Leviste, Mr. Morato, Conrad Leviste, Jones Jr., Excy Robles, FVR and Robbie Leviste. Robbie and Marc Leviste are sons of former Batangas Gov. Conrado Leviste.

RP rivers fast becoming junkyards

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

A RECENT television talk show hosted by Katrina Constantino over cable channel ANC discussed a very timely and important topic: "Saving Philippine Rivers," with water quality management chief Renato Cruz of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) as main panelist. The hour-long episode focused on the sad state and deterioration of many Philippine rivers today caused by the unabated disposal of untreated waste by some business firms on the riverbanks, including the blatant disregard of pollution regulations by narrow-minded owners of several stock farms which do not have proper waste disposal facilities.

According to Cruz, there are many "biologically dead" rivers all over the country, but "there is still hope for these dead rivers." For example, he said that the once polluted Pasig River has shown an improvement because of the strong commitment and high environment awareness of both the government and private sectors. Cruz added that from 25 "biologically dead" rivers last year, the figure is now down to 15.

And while on the subject of the Pasig River, one of the key men, the moving spirit behind its rehabilitation, is much-admired Hermie Esguerra, owner of super horse Wind Blown, now retired to stud at the Herma Farms in Batangas.

Recently, the Bulacan businessman played the key role in the river's continuing rehabilitation program by conducting the highly successful 4th Pasig River Heritage Marathon won by veteran internationalist Roy Vence. The 50-year-old Esguerra was appointed by Clean and Green Foundation chair former First Lady Amelita Ramos to head the PRHM two years ago.

On the Pasig's restoration, Esguerra said, "We want to educate our people to appreciate and respect the Pasig River." Esguerra, whose tankers ply the Pasig to deliver fuel to the Pandacan oil terminal, also decried the lack of respect of some business establishments which blatantly dispose of their solid and liquid waste into the river.

It's about time these people change their bad habit and adopt proper waste disposal practices. They should rally behind the crusade to rehabilitate the Pasig River until it is fresh and clean again and becomes a thriving factory of edible fish and other water resources just like in the good old days.

Incidentally, writing about clean waters and rich marine life evokes memories of my stay in Kona, Hawaii, some years back when I was a member of the Philippine team that took part in the Hawaii International Billfish Tournament (HIBT). I am recalling this event chiefly because it concerns the protection and conservation of the environment, the fish in the oceans in particular.

During a luau (Hawaiian feast) one evening, our guest speaker, US Coast Guard Captain Dennis "Mike" Egan, commended the HIBT participants for taking steps to save the seas for future generations by citing the tournament's tag-and-release format, which he said was simply "spectacular." Egan, who worked closely with the environmentalist Jacque Cousteau in the 1970s said, "It is interesting to know that this tournament does not result in the stripping of the ocean and these fish, but is a part of a very successful and scientific T&R program. This effort has had far-reaching effects." He praised the anglers from all over the world for releasing 80-90 percent of their catch back into the sea, hoping for their continued life and the proliferation of their species.

The tag-and-release program gets anglers thinking and living conservation.

***

BRIEFLY NOTED. The National Federation of Gamefowl Breeders (NFGB) will host this year's star-studded "Bakbakan Open National 8-Cock Derby" on April 12, 14, 16, 19, 21 and 23 at the Roligon Mega Cockpit, with a guaranteed prize of P3 million.

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2 THE CURSE
3 50 FIRST DATE
4 RESERVE

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238
1 (DOLBY) BUTTERFLY EFFECTS
2 PEEP SHOW
3 50 FIRST DATE
4 OTSO OTSO
5 RESERVE

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 CARMEN
2 OTSO OTSO

THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT
Araneta Center
ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7
1 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
2 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
3 (DOLBY DIGITAL) HIDALGO
4 (SDDS) 50 FIRST DATE
5 (DTS) TURQUE
6 THE CURSE
7 OTSO OTSO

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 (DOLBY EX) TORQUE
2 OTSO OTSO
3 (DTS ES) HIDALGO
4 DRAGON VS' NINJA

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121
1 OTSO OTSO
2 LOVE ACTUALLY
3 (DOLBY) HIDALGO
4 (DTS) TORQUE

Cine Nepo
(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489
1 OTSO OTSO
2 TOTALLY BLONDE
3 (DOLBY) WATER DEMON
4 (DTS) SOMETHING GOTTA GIVE

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa, Laguna) tel (049) 837.0926
1 LANGIT KO KALIGAYAHAN KO
2 50 FIRST DATE
3 (DTS) OTSO OTSO

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 OTSO OTSO
2 (DTS) OTSO OTSO
3 (DOLBY) 50 FIRST DATE
4 GHOST HOUSE

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146
1 OTSO OTSO
2 (DOLBY) DRAGON VS' NINJA
3 (DTS) 50 FIRST DATE
4 SPIRAL

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 A TALE OF TWO SISTERS
2 COLD MOUNTAIN
3 (DOLBY) OTSO OTSO

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 OTSO OTSO
2 OTSO OTSO
3 (DOLBY) GOTHIKA
4 (DTS) SOMETHING GOTTA GIVE

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795-3320
1 GOTHIKA
2 OTSO OTSO
3 TORQUE

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) MAGIC KITCHEN
2 LANGIT KO KALIGAYAHAN KO
3 NIGHT MARE
4 (DTS) OTSO OTSO

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) DUPLEX
2 NIGHT MARE
3 (DTS) 50 FIRST DATE
4 LANGIT KO KALIGAYAHAN KO
5 OTSO OTSO

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883
1 OTSO OTSO
2 KISKISAN

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558
1 DUPLEX
2 OTSO OTSO
3 GATHERING

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283
1 SOMETHING GOTTA GIVE
2 LANGIT KO KALIGAYAHAN KO
3 (DTS) GHOST HOUSE
4 (DOLBY) OTSO OTSO

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel 520.8914
1 (DTS) RESERVE

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 OTSO OTSO
2 GOTHIKA
3 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
4 LOVE ACTUALLY

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657
1 OTSO OTSO
2 GOOD LAWYERS WIFE

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SCOOBY-DOO 2
OPENS ON MARCH 24

Luat bows to Hsia

TAIWANESE pool superstar Hsia Hui-kai outlasted Rodolfo "Boy Samson" Luat of the Philippines, 9-7, in the grueling finals last night to win the rich Japan International Open in Tokyo, Japan.

Hsia pocketed the top purse of $16,000, with Luat settling for $8,000.

The 46-year-old Luat from Angeles City reached the finals by dumping Japan's Hisashi Yamamoto, 9-3, and arranging the title clash with Hsia, who earlier beat another Filipino and 2000 champion Antonio Lining, 9-6.

Lining earlier downed compatriot Dennis Orcullo, 9-7, and Hsia knocked out Warren Kiamco, 9-6.

Luat eliminated legendary pool master Efren "Bata" Reyes, 9-4, in the round of eight.

Marlon Bernardino

Gomes here for Elorde Awards

FORMER world champion Harold Gomes and his family arrived last night from his hometown of Providence, Rhode Islands, and were warmly welcomed by the Elorde family, the press and several friends.

Gomes, the world champion who lost his junior lightweight title to the legendary Flash Elorde during the opening of the Araneta Coliseum on March 16, 1960, is in town to attend the Gabriel "Flash" Elorde Boxing Awards Night at the Dusit Hotel Nikko on Thursday, March 25.

He will receive the Flash Elorde Memorial Trophy, a recognition given to an opponent of Da Flash every year for their outstanding accomplishments in the ring and for staying as a respected and very good friend of Da Flash even until their retirements.

Gomes will visit and lay a wreath on the grave of Flash Elorde today at the Manila Memorial Park in Parañaque. Later, Gomes and his party will be dinner guests of the Elorde family at their residence.

The Awards night will also bestow the Boxer of the Year award to Manny Pacquiao.

Now on its fourth year, the Awards will also honor Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, former GAB chair Dominador Cepeda, Pacquiao's business manager, Rod Nazario, and special boxing friend Takafusa Kawarai.

Also to be cited are The Inner Wheel club of Parañaque Sucat District 381, the Rotary Club of Parañaque Sucat District 3830, Sports Radio and the Philippine Sportswriters Association.

Posthumous awards will be conferred on former world champ Pedro Adigue, matchmaker Candido Bautista and trainers Nestor Angel and his son, Antonio.

Bilbao trips mighty Real

MADRID, Spain—Left back Asier del Horno scored two goals Saturday as Athletic de Bilbao downed Spanish league leader Real Madrid, 4-2, and inflicted a blow on the powerhouse team's hopes of retaining the title.

Spanish international striker Raul Gonzalez scored twice for Madrid but the goals couldn't prevent the team from suffering its second defeat in four days, following its 3-2 loss against Zaragoza in the Copa del Rey final.

Valencia can cut Madrid's lead to one point if it beats struggling Mallorca on Sunday, while FC Barcelona will move six points behind its archrival if it gains its ninth straight league win on Sunday against Real Sociedad.

Madrid coach Carlos Queiroz said the result was "unfair" and praised the team's "pride and character" for fighting back to equalize when trailing by two goals at halftime. He added Madrid may have been affected by the exertions of Wednesday's cup final, which ran into extra time.

"When you're tired, your concentration is a little lower," said Queiroz, whose off-form side takes on Monaco in the first leg of the Champions League quarterfinals on Tuesday.

Reuters

Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX

Ali 3	HIDALGO
Ali 4	50 FIRST DATES
Ali 5	TORQUE
Ali 6	THE CURSE
Ali 7	OTSO OTSO

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MAR 25	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
MAR 27	CRAZY RIGHT NOW WITH VANESS WU
MAR 28	PBA: SHELL VS. GINEBRA
MAR 31	PBA: SAN MIGUEL VS. ALASKA
APR 2	ENRIQUE IGLESIAS -7 ASIA WORLD TOUR
APR 4	PBA: GINEBRA VS. TALK 'N' TEXT
APR 8	OLPH RETREAT (7AM)/ SHALOM (1PM)

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THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA

EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	BALAT SIBUYAS / AMBISYOSA
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

A	OTSO OTSO
B	PEEP SHOW
C	

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	MILAN
CINEMA-2	LANGIT MO KALIGAYAHAN KO
CINEMA-3	DRAGON VS NINJA
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	CARMEN
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	KUYA
CINEMA-6	U-BELT
CINEMA-7	COLD MOUNTAIN
CINEMA-8	ANNIE B.
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	TORQUE
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HIDALGO
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
CINEMA-12	LOVE ACTUALLY
CINEMA-14	GOTHIKA
CINEMA-15	GRUDGE 2

LORES

CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN

(LAS PIÑAS)	RUNAWAY JURY
CINEMA-1	ANNIE B
CINEMA-2	COLD MOUNTAIN
CINEMA-4	TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE

UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL

(PARAÑAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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RESERVED SEATING
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1	THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT	12:30, 3:05, 5:40 8:15, 10:50	R-13
2	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN	11:00, 1:10, 3:20 5:30, 7:40, 9:50	GP
3	50 FIRST DATES	11:35, 1:50, 4:05 6:20, 8:35, 10:50	R-18
4	OTSO-OTSO	12:20, 2:40, 5:00 7:20, 9:40	PG-13

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CINEMA 1	HIDALGO	11:00, 1:40, 4:20, 7:00, 9:40	PG-13
CINEMA 2	50 FIRST DATES	11:00, 1:10, 3:20, 5:30, 7:40, 10:00	PG-13

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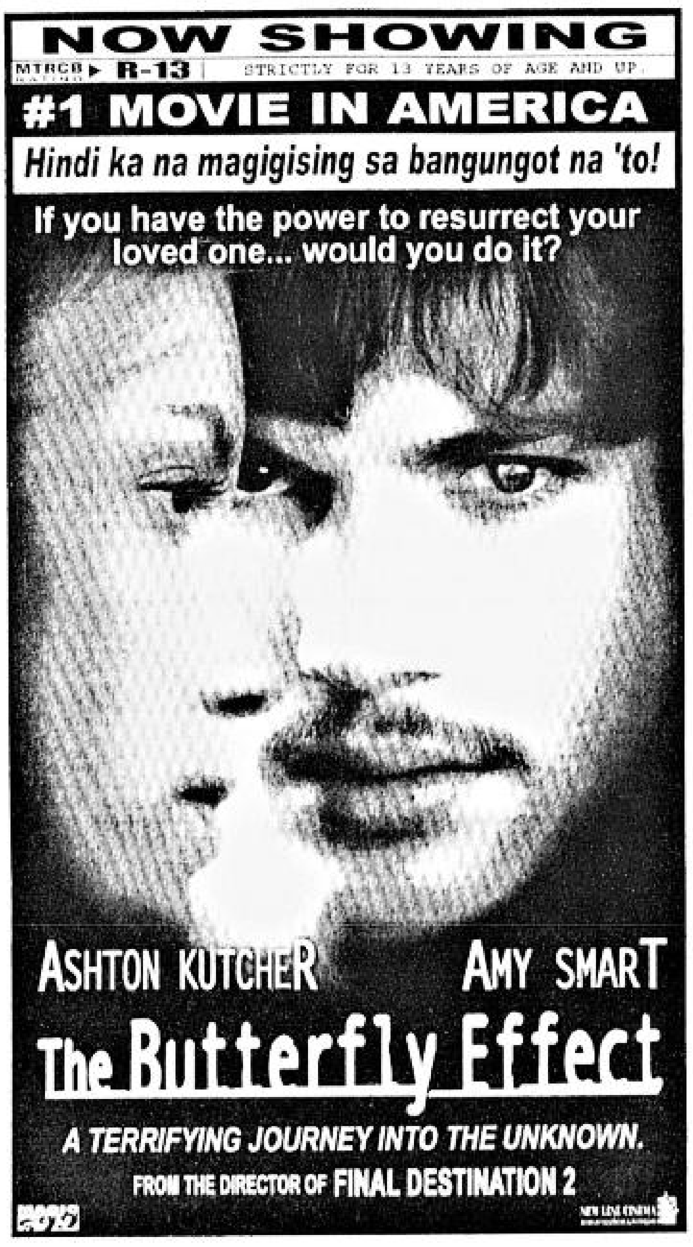

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Cinema	Movie	Times
CINEMA 1 THX	HIDALGO	12:00, 2:45, 5:30, 8:15, 10:25
2	50 FIRST DATES	10:25, 12:40, 2:55, 5:10, 7:25, 9:40
3	BUTTERFLY EFFECT	11:55, 2:05, 4:15, 6:25, 8:35, 10:25
4	THE GRUDGE 2	11:05, 1:15, 3:25, 5:35, 7:25, 9:55
5	OTSO-OTSO	10:35, 12:50, 3:05, 5:20, 7:35, 9:50
6	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN	11:55, 2:05, 4:15, 6:25, 8:35, 10:25
7	TORQUE	10:50, 1:00, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:45
8	LOVE ACTUALLY	10:20, 1:10, 4:00, 6:50, 9:40
9	THE CURSE	12:20, 2:20, 4:20, 6:20, 8:20, 10:20
10	SORUM	11:55, 2:05, 4:15, 6:25, 8:35, 10:25

MATINEE: Monday to Friday/ 10 am-4pm except holidays
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Regular Price: P130 THX / P95/65 for two levels cinemas / P95 for one level cinemas

ERMITA 526-7185 / 536-7809 to 12

Cinema	Movie	Times
1	50 FIRST DATES	10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 5:00, 7:15, 9:40
2	THE GRUDGE 2	11:15, 1:05, 2:55, 4:45, 6:35, 8:25, 10:00
3	HIDALGO	11:00, 1:35, 4:10, 6:45, 9:40
4	THE CURSE	11:15, 1:05, 2:55, 4:45, 6:35, 8:25, 10:00
5	LOVE ACTUALLY	11:00, 1:40, 4:20, 5:05, 7:15, 9:40
6	BUTTERFLY EFFECT	11:35, 2:05, 4:35, 7:05, 9:40
7	OTSO-OTSO	10:15, 12:30, 2:45, 5:00, 7:15, 9:40

Big R Supercenter METRO EAST 682-8193/99 / 682-8280

Cinema	Movie	Times
1	THE CURSE	11:50, 2:10, 4:30, 6:50, 9:10
2	50 FIRST DATES	11:50, 2:10, 4:30, 6:50, 9:10 SDDS
3	LOVE ACTUALLY	12:40, 3:20, 6:00, 9:00
4	HIDALGO	12:00, 3:00, 6:00, 9:00
5	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN	10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:50, 9:00
6	THE GRUDGE 2	10:40, 12:40, 2:40, 4:40, 6:40, 8:40, 10:30
7	BUTTERFLY EFFECT	10:50, 1:25, 4:00, 6:35, 9:10
8	OTSO-OTSO	11:00, 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00

Big R Supercenter NOVALICHES / FAIRVIEW 935-3229 / 31

Cinema	Movie	Times
1	THE GRUDGE 2	11:25, 1:15, 3:05, 4:55, 6:45, 8:35
2	OTSO-OTSO	11:45, 1:55, 4:05, 6:15, 8:30
3	BUTTERFLY EFFECT	11:20, 1:35, 3:50, 6:05, 8:30
4	THE CURSE	11:25, 1:15, 3:05, 4:55, 6:45, 8:35
5	HIDALGO	12:05, 2:50, 5:35, 8:30
6	TORQUE	10:25, 12:15, 2:05, 3:55, 5:45, 7:35, 9:00
7	50 FIRST DATES	11:45, 1:55, 4:05, 6:15, 8:30, 10:05
8	SORUM	11:35, 1:40, 3:45, 5:50, 8:00

Citisquare MALABON 288-0985/2575	big Supercenter CAINTA 240-4661	Big R Supercenter STA. ROSA Laguna (049)837-0907
1 HIDALGO	1 50 FIRST DATES	1 DRAGON VS. NINJA
2 OTSO-OTSO	2 OTSO-OTSO	2 OTSO-OTSO
3 50 FIRST DATES	3 MEMENTO MORI	3 CARMEN
4 CARMEN	4 HIDALGO	4 LANGIT MO KALIGAYAHAN KO
		5 50 FIRST DATES

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1 THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE	1 LANGIT MO KALIGAYAHAN KO	1 CARMEN
2 OTSO-OTSO	2 WATER DEMON	2 DRAGON VS. NINJA
3 DUPLEX	3 TORQUE	3 OTSO-OTSO
4 LOVE ACTUALLY	4 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN	4 MAGIC KITCHEN
5 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN	5 OTSO-OTSO	5 TORQUE
		6 HIDALGO THX STANDARD

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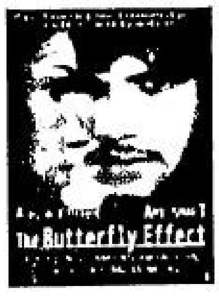
1 HIDALGO	1 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN	1 RUNAWAY JURY
2 50 FIRST DATES	2 21 GRAMS	2 DUPLEX
3 THE CURSE	3 OTSO-OTSO	3 OTSO-OTSO
4 BUTTERFLY EFFECT	4 SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE	4 DRAGON VS. NINJA
5 OTSO-OTSO	5 WATER DEMON	5 CARMEN
6 THE GRUDGE 2	6 GHOST HOUSE	6 THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE



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Federer tames Agassi

Henman subdues rival, also gains final

INDIAN WELLS, California—Top-ranked Roger Federer of Switzerland outlasted Andre Agassi of the United States, 4-6, 6-3, 6-4, in the semifinals of the Pacific Life Open.

Federer, 22, and Agassi, 33, played mostly from the baseline Saturday in heat that reached 41 Celsius (106 Fahrenheit), with the Swiss star's quickness finally turning the match his way.

Federer will play for the title on Sunday against Tim Henman of Britain, who defeated Irakli Labadze of Georgia, 6-3, 6-2. Henman holds a 6-1 career edge over Federer, and his straight-set victory at Rotterdam was Federer's lone loss in 27 matches.

FEDERER REUTERS

Tied 4-4 in the third set and down 40-15 with Agassi serving, Federer raced to his left to return a deep shot, whirled all the way around and dashed far to his right to hit a hard forehand, then ended the point by rushing forward to power another forehand past the drawn-in Agassi.

Agassi, who volleyed to send Federer scurrying to his right, didn't expect him to hit such a good shot back. Agassi had to reach to get to the ball and popped it up, allowing Federer to charge in and hit a winner.

Federer won the next three points, then served out for his 26th victory in 27 matches, including a 21-1 start to 2004.

"That turned out to be more crucial than it seemed at the time, 4-all, 40-5. That obviously led to the break," Agassi said. *AP*

Annika takes 2-shot spread into last round

SUPERSTITION MOUNTAIN, Arizona— Annika Sorenstam had a great start and a good finish to take a two-stroke lead into the final round of the Safeway International.

Sorenstam, in her LPGA Tour season debut, chipped in from 60 feet for an eagle on the second hole, then finished the third round Saturday with a pair of birdies for a 4-under 68 that left her at 16-under 200.

"I'm definitely in a spot where I want to be," Sorenstam said. "I've got to play well tomorrow, but leading going into the last day is what you want. Hopefully I'll shoot in the 60s tomorrow and feel really good."

Nineteen-year-old tour rookie Shi Hyun Ahn shot a 66 and was two strokes back at 14-under 202 on the 6,620-yard layout at the Superstition Mountain Golf Club 50 miles east of Phoenix.

Jennifer Rosales matched par 72 and stood in a six-way tie for 22nd place at 213. Rosales played her first 11 holes at two under with birdies on the second and 10th but had back-to-back bogeys on the 12th and 13th.

Michelle Wie kept up her impressive play with a 70. Of the 82 players who made Friday's cut, the 14-year-old sensation was ninth overall at 7-under 209. Her previous best finish in 11 LPGA events was a tie for eighth at last year's Kraft Nabisco Championship.

"I think today was the hardest round of my three rounds," she said. "I didn't hit my drivers and my irons that good today, and I had the worst lies."

Still, Wie had three birdies and only one bogey in the round.

"I guess I'm a little bit tired," she said. "I haven't played in a tournament for a long time and I haven't been exercising in a week. I'm worn down, but I'm still ready to go tomorrow."

Cristie Kerr, who began the day one shot behind the second-round leader Sorenstam, shot a 70 and was three back at 13-under 203. *AP*

POWER PLANT
CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41 DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND EX

BUTTERFLY EFFECT R13 12:50, 3:10, 5:30, 7:50, 10:10	50 FIRST DATES PG13 12:45, 3:00, 5:15, 7:30, 9:45	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN GP 1:00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00
LOVE ACTUALLY R18 1:15, 4:00, 6:45, 9:30	HIDALGO PG13 1:20: 4:10, 7:00, 9:50	50 FIRST DATES PG13 1:20, 3:35, 5:50, 8:05

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OPENS MARCH 24
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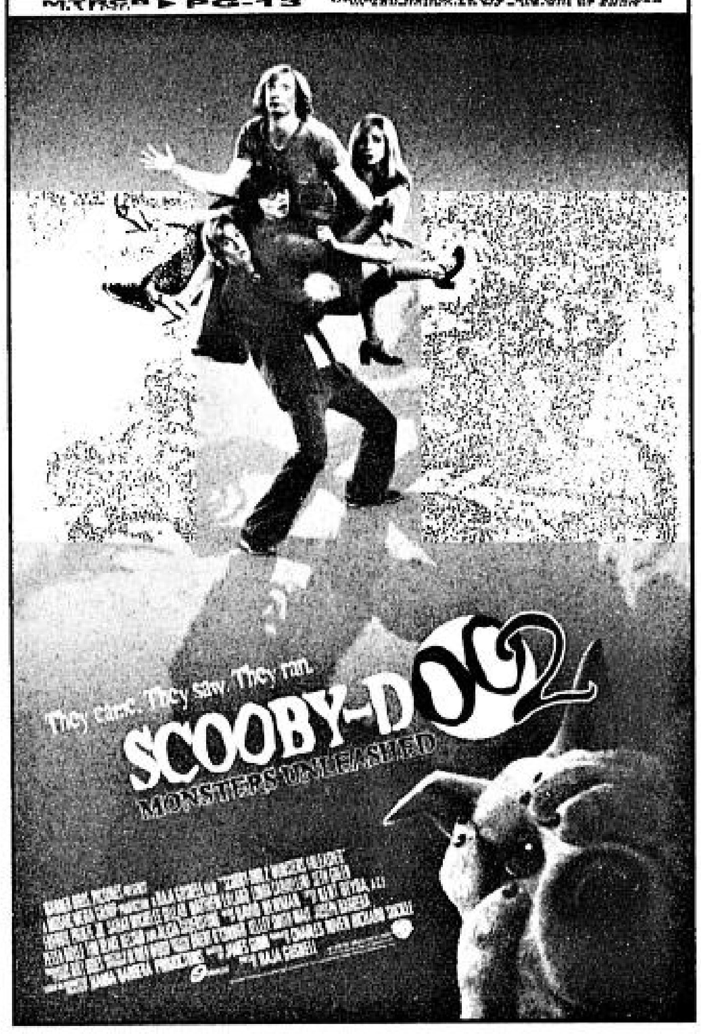
EVIL HITS THE ROAD

JIM CAVIEZEL
RHONA MITRA
HIGHWAYMEN

OPENS MARCH 24!
MTRCB ▶ PG-13



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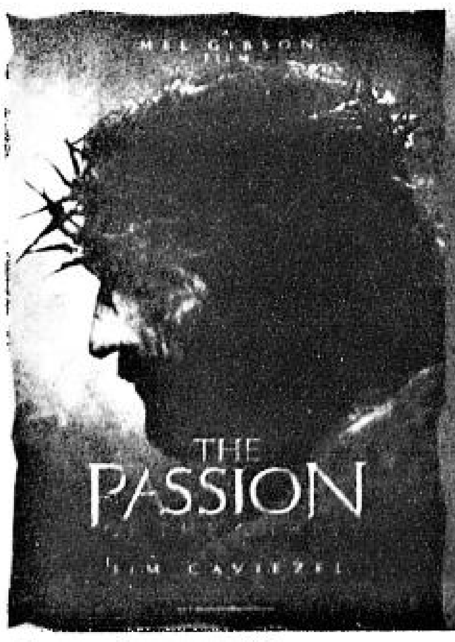

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MTRCB RATING: PARENTAL GUIDANCE 13
Parents are strongly cautioned in bringing along kids below 10 yrs old because of some scenes that might stress their sensibilities.
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More movies on page C3.

OPENS MARCH 31
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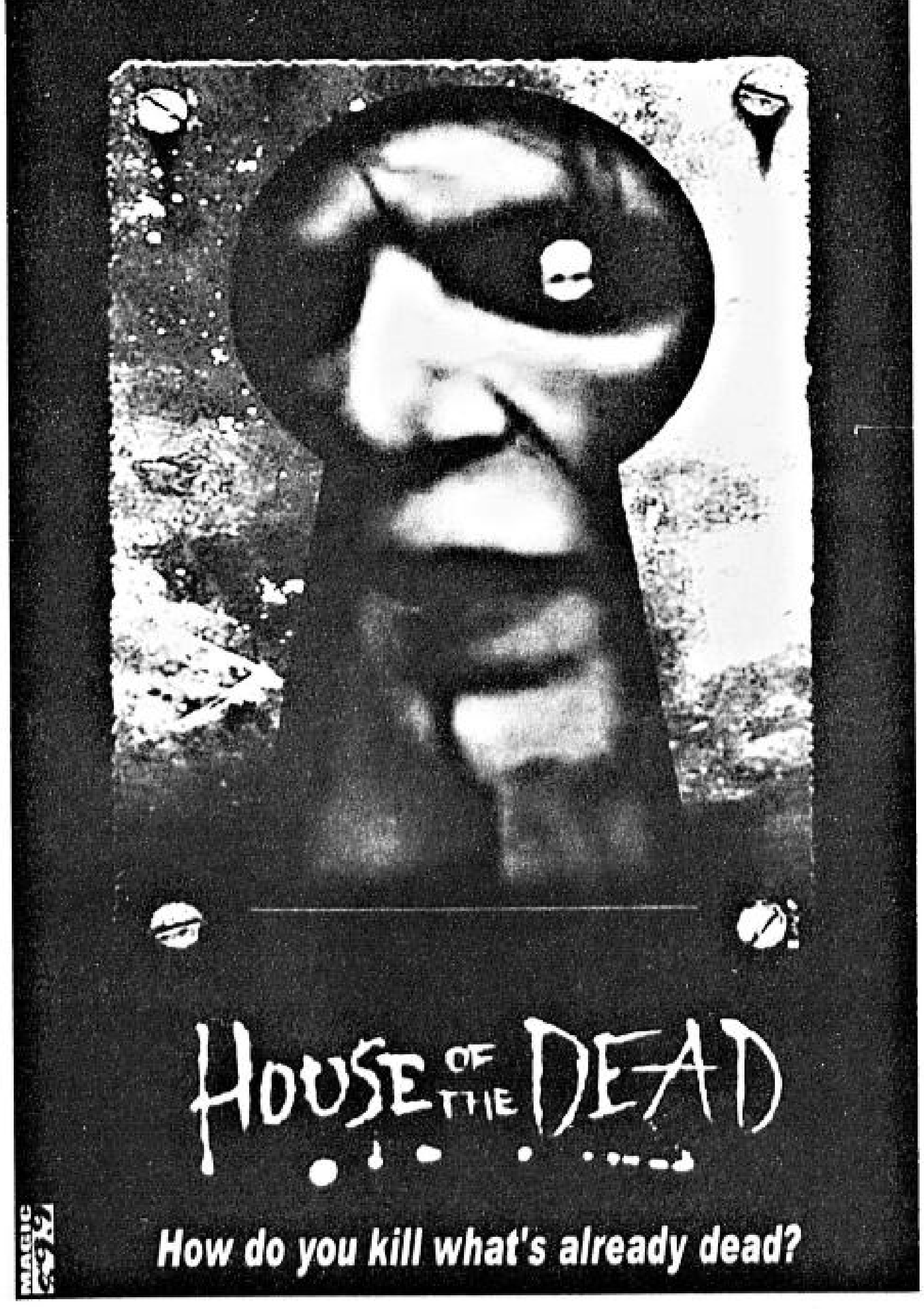
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SPORTS

Heat subdue fading 76ers

Allen Iverson on trading block?

MIAMI—Dwyane Wade and Eddie Jones scored 17 points apiece to lead the Miami Heat to their fourth consecutive victory and seventh in eight games, a 101-69 rout of fading Philadelphia on Saturday.

The 76ers have lost four in a row, are falling further back in the race for the final playoff spot and dealing with trade rumors surrounding star Allen Iverson.

The Heat proved once again that when they are healthy, they are one of the Eastern Conference's best teams. They improved to 14-7 with a starting lineup of Wade, Jones, Caron Butler, Lamar Odom and Brian Grant.

Odom added 14 points, Udonis Haslem chipped in 12 points and 10 rebounds off the bench, and Rafer Alston hit three 3-pointers to finish with 12.

Kenny Thomas and Iverson scored 23 points each to lead Philadelphia. It was Iverson's best game since returning from a swollen right knee. He went 8-of-22 from the field and made the team's only two 3-pointers. The Sixers finished 2-of-16 from beyond the arc.

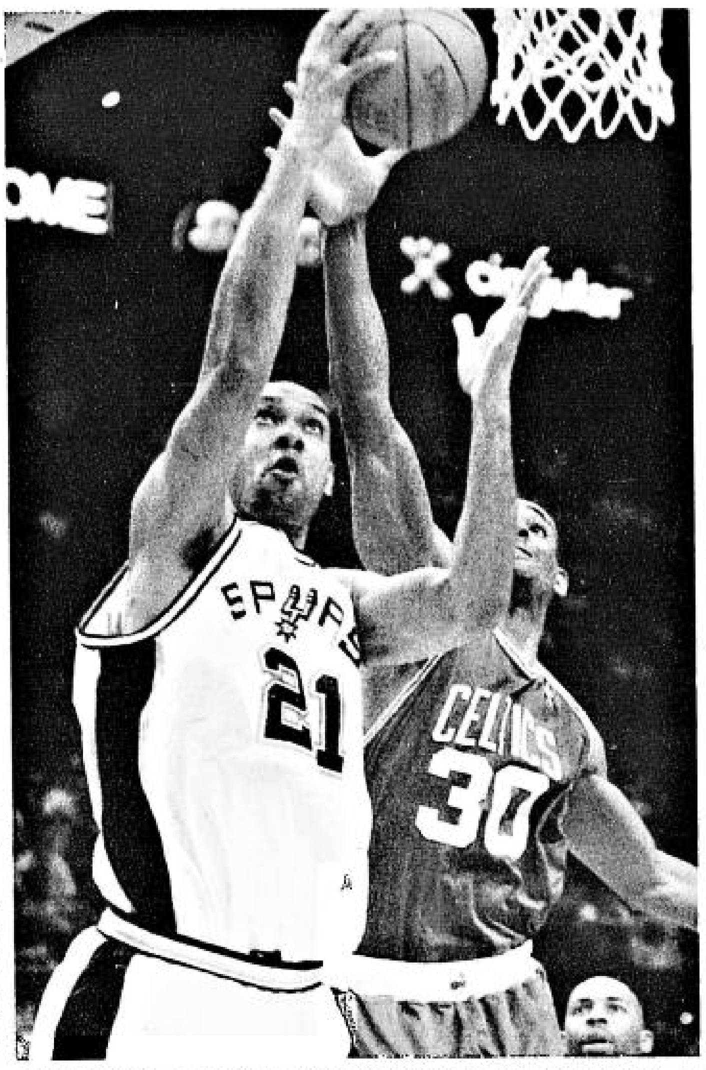
In San Antonio, Tim Duncan marked his return to San Antonio's starting lineup with 26 points and 15 rebounds as San Antonio beat Boston, 103-87, for the 12th straight time.

Manu Ginobili added 26 points in 24 minutes for San Antonio, which narrowed Minnesota's lead in the Midwest Division to 1 1/2 games.

After missing nine games with a knee injury, Duncan came off the bench for the first time in his NBA career in the Spurs' victory over the Timberwolves on Thursday.

Back in his customary position, he shot 10-for-13 and made all six of his free throws while leading a defense that limited Boston to 34 second-half points. *AP*

Complete results: Miami 101, Philadelphia 69; Utah 87, Atlanta 81; Memphis 99, Indiana 95; Chicago 87, New York 81; San Antonio 103, Boston 87; Phoenix 123, Milwaukee 111; Portland 92, Orlando 73.



DUNCAN (21) goes up for a shot against Boston center Mark Blount. AP

Alabama stuns No. 1 Stanford

NEW YORK—Kennedy Winston scored 21 points as the eighth seed Alabama Crimson Tide stunned top ranked Stanford Cardinal, 70-67, in Phoenix Regional play at the NCAA Tournament on Saturday.

Stanford became the first number one seed team to be eliminated from this year's tournament as Dan Grunfeld missed a 3-point attempt at the buzzer.

The Cardinal led the game 53-40 with 7:40 to play, but a 16-0 Alabama run stunned Stanford, which lost for just the second time in 32 games this season.

However, Grunfield missed his shot, giving the Crimson Tide (19-13) a date in the Sweet 16 against Syracuse next week in Phoenix.

Fifth seeded Syracuse, the defending national champions, survived a late rally to edge fourth ranked Maryland, 72-70, earlier in the day.

In another major upset, second seeded Gonzaga, which had been a Cinderella team for several years, was this time an upset victim, falling to number 10 Nevada, 91-72, in St. Louis Region play.

Kevinn Pinkney scored 20 points, Todd Okeson added 19 and Kirk Snyder had 18 for the Wolf Pack.

In East Rutherford Region play, Top ranked St Joseph's (29-1) survived a scare to edge eight seed Texas Tech, 70-65. *Reuters*

Tiozzo snares WBA light-heavy title

LYON, France—Frenchman Fabrice Tiozzo clinched the WBA light-heavyweight title on Saturday, edging out Italian title holder Silvio Branco on a points decision in a thrilling bout.

The three judges scored it 114-112, 114-112, 113-113 in favor of Tiozzo, who won his 46th of 48 professional fights.

With the loss, 37-year-old Branco relinquished the title he won last October against Mehdi Sahnoune of France and lost his seventh of 58 career fights.

Tiozzo, 34, dominated the early exchanges, troubling Branco with superior speed of foot and rapid punch combinations.

By the fourth round, Branco was leaning increasingly on the ropes and bleeding heavily from the nose after an accidental clash of heads.

However, profiting from his longer reach, Branco fought his way back into the bout and took the fifth and sixth rounds.

In the eighth, Branco felled Tiozzo with a fierce flurry of blows and the Frenchman wobbled again as he absorbed repeated blows to the face. *AP*

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Gov't revives plan to tax 'texting'

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT is reviving a proposal to impose an excise tax on text messages, a possible lucrative revenue source that can substantially ease its budget deficit woes.

According to a ranking. finance official, the government might eventually tap text messaging for additional revenue so it could reduce the deficit and achieve its target of having a balanced budget by 2009.

"If we do it (taxing text messages), it will provide very huge revenues. We have listed the issues concerning that, and part of the discussions include questions raised against the proposal," the finance official said.

The official said that with the estimated 150 million text messages sent a day, the government could generate billions of pesos if it would pursue the implementation of taxing text messages.

Should a minimum one-centavo excise tax be imposed on each sent text message, the government could earn roughly P550 million a year. With a 10-centavo excise tax, it could generate P5.5 billion.

The figures, however, does not consider the amount of free text messages granted by telecommunications companies. "But the revenue figures will still be big even if the number of free text messages are deducted," the official said.

But while the government is hard-pressed to trim down the deficit, which stood at P199.9 billion in 2003, it may not be able to implement the proposal without first dealing with questions raised against imposing tax on text messages.

One concern raised against the move is whether text messages can really be subject to excise tax. Another government official said imposing excise tax on text messages veers away from the true principle behind this tax.

"Excise tax should only be imposed on things that have 'negative externalities', such as alcohol, cigarettes, luxury vehicles and jewelry. Why should we include texting?" the official said.

Revenue Deputy Commissioner Kim Henares likewise expressed reservations over the proposal, saying text messages were already covered by the value-added tax on prepaid cell cards.

"There are a lot of issues to be considered in taxing text messages. If we will tax texting separately, why not impose another tax on cell phone calls? Or, what about land-line telephone service that also offers a texting feature?" she said.

The government is preparing a set of additional revenue-generating measures that will boost tax collection by about P40 billion a year. The Development Budget Coordination Committee is set to discuss the proposed tax measures, which may include the plan to tax text messages.

The move to come up with additional revenue measures is intended to help the government achieve its fiscal goal of arresting the budget deficit. This year, the government is hoping to trim the budget gap to P197.8 billion.

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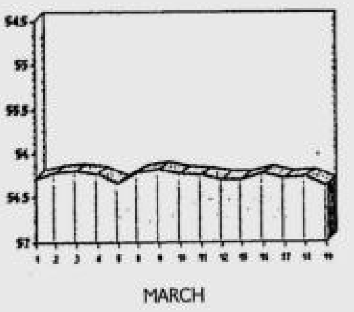

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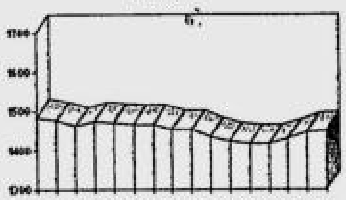
PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

MARCH



(See stock market report on Page B6)

WEAK trading is expected this week as fund managers and analysts see little incentive to jump into stocks this week.

Some fund managers, however, see some bargain-hunting as some stocks have reached very low levels.

"There may be an upward bias (this) week on the back of bottom fishing by investors on some battered stocks," said Paul Joseph Garcia, chief investment officer at ING Investment Management Philippines.

Boosted by the US Federal Reserve's hint that it would not yet raise interest rates, the benchmark Philippine Stock Exchange composite index was up 27 points or 1.9 percent to 1,450.83 last week.

"The Fed's latest move temporarily took away the interest-rate uncertainty out of the picture," Jovis Vistan of AB Capital Securities said.

Independent research firm Team Research Inc. said stock prices would continue to move within a tight range with the lack of corporate incentives.

Team Research said the first-quarter outlook for corporate earnings is likely to be weak given the prevailing economic conditions.

It added that in terms of corporate earnings, telecommunication firms may continue to outperform after enjoying subscriber growth.

"I think the market might try to factor in bad news," a senior analyst of the firm said.

TRADING/B6

BSP, banks agree on deposit secrecy waiver

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO Sental ng Pilipinas and the Bankers Association of the Philippines have agreed to facilitate data-sharing for a centralized credit bureau by seeking a waiver on secrecy rights.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura, who convened a meeting with bankers last week, said the bankers had accepted the proposal for the BSP to participate in data gathering and processing.

Under the plan, the banks will provide data on both "positive" and "negative" list of borrowers to the BSP, which will then process the information. Without identifying the lenders to protect each one's competitive edge, the BSP will relay the processed information to the credit bureau.

But to make such a system possible in view of the bank secrecy law, a waiver by the borrower must be secured as soon as an application in submitted. The BSP must also forge an agreement with the bankers on the secrecy waiver.

Buenaventura said the bankers agreed that the proposed waiver "made sense."

"We just have to work it out and eventually make it clear once and for all. That credit bureau is a requirement. They know they'll have to do it for their own good," he said.

Without a credit bureau, he said the banks' risk weighting would increase.

To date, the Bankers Association of the Philippines has a data-sharing facility which, however, included only information on delinquent borrowers. In general, banks are still hesitant to share information on good borrowers with their peers, as they fear this will reduce their competitive edge.

The proposed centralized credit bureau will also link up with the Chamber of Thrift Banks and the Rural Bankers Association of the Philippines.

"Eventually we'd like to have a law passed," Buenaventura said, referring to existing restrictions under the BSP's charter against putting up any subsidiary. Otherwise, the BSP would have put up a credit bureau.

The BSP chief said he believed a lot of big loan accounts would not have gone sour in the

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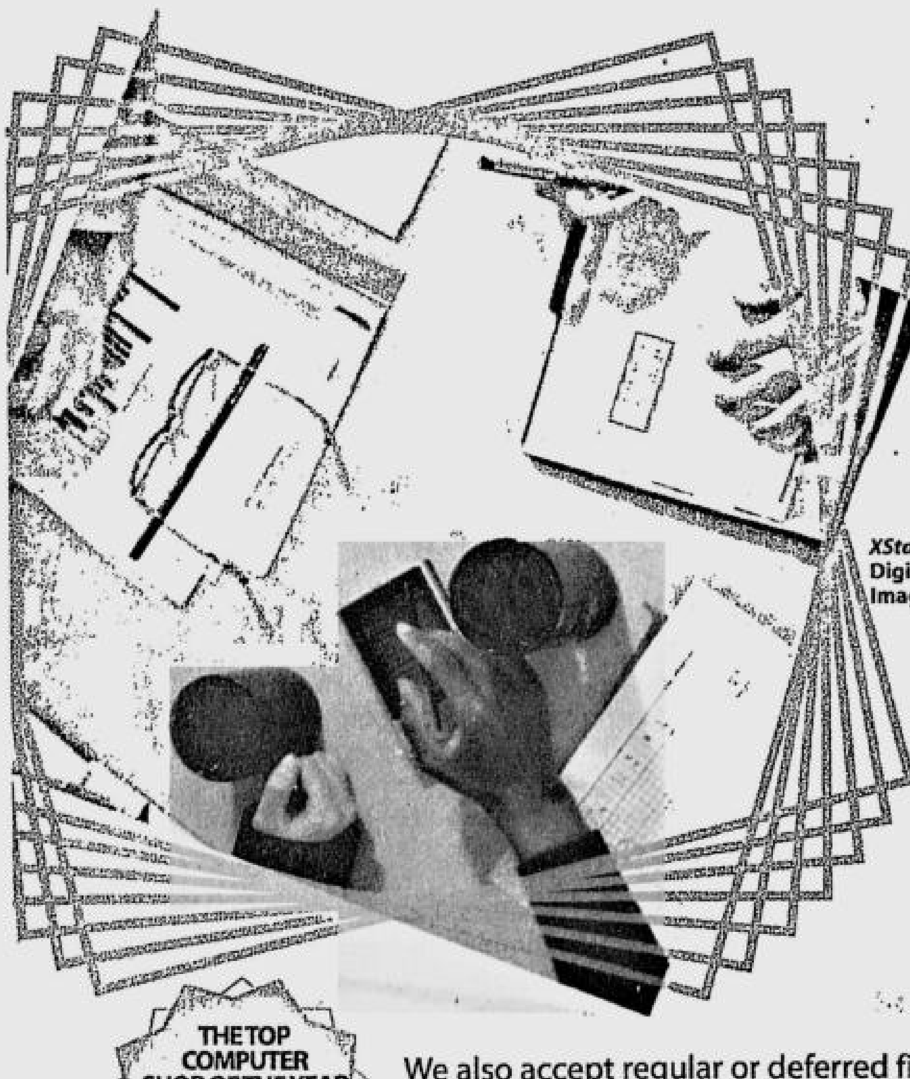

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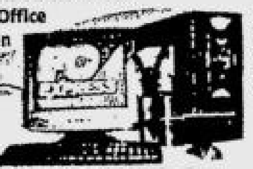

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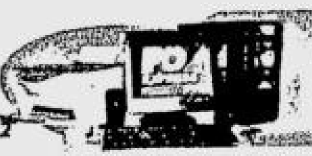

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Creditors want funds for Home Cable put in escrow

By Clarissa S. Batino

EVEN before ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. could raise $30 million through borrowing so that its cable TV arm could finalize its merger with PLDT's Philippine Home Cable Holdings, some creditors of Home Cable are already planning to put the funds in escrow to protect their interest in the company amounting to P1.35 billion.

A source from a Home Cable creditor said that placing the funds in escrow would guarantee that the money would be used for the expansion of Beyond Cable Holdings Inc.

Beyond Cable is the surviving entity from the merger of ABS-CBN's Sky Vision Corp. and Central CATV Inc. with Home Cable of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. The Lopez group will own two-thirds of the company while PLDT will own the balance.

While most of Home Cable's about 15 creditors have agreed to restructure the cable firm's debt provided there would be a $30 million inflow, many would like to see first the actual infusion of the investment committed by ABS-CBN.

The broadcast firm last week said it would borrow $30 million from a foreign bank. Of the amount, $5 million will be used to update loan payments while $25 million will be earmarked for the acquisition of set-up boxes, which protect cable signals from piracy.

"Creditors would like some assurance that the money would be infused into the cable business and make the joint venture viable. The money must be placed in escrow," said a source involved in the restructuring.

C. LUZON GROWTH CENTER

BCDA affiliate, Sudeco to develop ecozone, tourism hubs in Bataan

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE BASES Conversion Development Authority said that its subsidiary Bataan Technology Park Inc. (BTPI) recently signed an agreement with Subic Bay Development and Industrial Estate (Sudeco) on the joint development of certain pieces of property in Bataan.

BTPI president and CEO Isaac Puno III said the agreement was expected to spur economic growth in Central Luzon.

"We (BTPI and Sudeco) can now jointly develop the parcels of land to make them more attractive to business locators and tourists leading to the creation of more jobs in the region," Puno said.

BTPI is the estate manager and administrator of the similarly named economic zone in Morong, Bataan. The zone used to house the Philippine Refugee Processing Center.

The Bataan TechnoPark is a 365-hectare special economic zone designed to host high-tech agriculture and aquaculture ventures.

The ecozone is also being promoted as a tourist destination and venue for out-of-town seminars, workshops and team-building programs.

Sudeco, for its part, owns a 378-ha land in barangays Mabayo and Sabang in Morong.

Sudeco plans to develop the property for residential and commercial uses as well as for eco-tourism and leisure activities.

"Sudeco's property has a pristine beach with fine, powdery sand and is considered among the finest beaches in the country," Puno said.

He said that under the agreement, BTPI and Sudeco would conduct programs designed to educate people about development practices that are environment-friendly and sustainable.

Puno also noted: "The (area for development) is a mere 15-minute drive from the Subic Bay Freeport via the Subic-Morong gate. It is very accessible from the freeport's airport and seaport facilities."

The Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority itself is undertaking projects geared for higher tourist traffic.

SBMA Chair Felicito C. Payumo announced last week that construction of a P20-million beach-front hotel at the freeport's Moon Bay marina complex had started.

Payumo said the planned 30-room Subic Park Hotel would boost the SMBA's effort to promote the economic zone not only as an industrial estate but also as a tourist destination.

This leader is a woman!

MINDANAWORLD

Joji Ilagan-Bian

UNTIL a few years ago, working and getting oneself involved in the corporate arena was like swimming in a pool of predators. 'Power' and 'control' were the daily buzzwords, and normally the top of the hierarchy were cold -blooded predators. It's easy to spot the type—tough, arrogant and ruthless.

Maybe some women even tried to emulate them, hoping that they could go up the corporate ladder faster. But most often, we felt uncomfortable; because that wasn't the real us.

We faced many challenges in moving up—exclusion from the old boys network, non-supportive bosses or colleagues, sexual discrimination and male chauvinism.

In a study of 30 women holding middle management positions in 15 Fortune 500 companies, it was concluded that women were under enormous pressure to do outstanding work continuously and consistently demonstrate competency on the job. Female managers have to work harder to be noticed and to prove that they can to handle the job, the family and everything else.

One businesswoman told me," I am more at a disadvantage than my male peerș because I am excluded from the old boys network. This network is crucial to assessing information about implicit norms and power coalitions." I think that the old boys network exists even in the most progressive corporations. But men don't do this on purpose; they just don't think about it. It's simply not in their level of consciousness.

In a male-dominated foreign trade mission that I once led, the men would often want to visit the many entertainment centers in the evening to relax and unwind, and all the time I would exclude myself because I don't drink and I am allergic to smoke, or because I was simply too tired. I think they appreciate it when I duck out every now and then. I know what they do and, honestly, I am not interested to know more.

Male chauvinism still accounts for a significant part of the obstacles women faced in the corporate world. There are many other common misconceptions men continue to have of women such as the following: When the going gets tough, women fall apart; we are indecisive, moody, inconsistent and too emotional; we are at times too pushy, difficult to work for and make things complicated that they need be, and we are neither good team players, nor capable of seeing the big picture. Does any one of this sound familiar? These common prejudices some men have on women in the workplace are usually not based on experience, but on ignorance.

In fact, according to Michael S. Kimmel, a sociologist at the State University of New York at Stonybrook and author of Manhood: The American Quest, "the invasion of women in the workplace and the near extinction of the all-male arena in corporate America has thrown many men for a loop, particularly those who have grown accustomed to and who support the old ideologies. Such a shift in the workplace has helped to change some old prejudices." Kimmel further adds, "this lies not on the supposed new power of women, but in the rapid changes taking place in today's corporation—furious, fast-paced, restructuring and reengineering. As more and more women moved into the leadership and decision-making positions, researches suggest that men's sexist attitude is softening. A competent women is a formidable challenge to many men. Men are accustomed to sometimes losing the battle to another man, but they don't quite know how to play the same game with and losing to a woman. There will always be some men who'd simply rather not work alongside and, particularly, for a woman. But today, it appears that this attitude is waning.

Men are no longer promoted based on gender alone. These days, with the economic crisis, where many companies are downsizing, everyone has to work harder to survive. I think it is a clear indication that job performance is what counts—male or female, it doesn't really matter.

The women leaders of today, and there are many of us now in all sectors—business, politics, government, civil society—we are just everywhere, have redefined the concept of power and have discovered how power can be used to help people. We redefine power as a caring kind of power, not self serving but one that is directed towards advancing an agenda. And we women are comfortable with this definition of power because it encompasses the notion of empowering others.

Note : March is women's month and this article is a tribute to women.

(Joji Ilagan Bian is a commissioner of the Mindanao Commission of Women and former chair of the Mindanao Business Council. Email suggestions and comments to jojibian2@yahoo.com)

Business agenda draws support

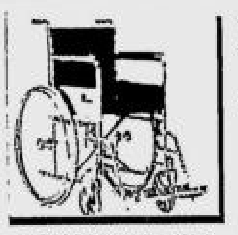
THE CONVENOR group of the First 100 Days Business Agenda for the next administration was pleased by the "enthusiastic response" shown by presidential aspirant Fernando Poe Jr., to whom the paper was recently presented.

The group, which includes former Trade Secretary Jose Pardo, Philippine Long Distance chair Manuel Pangilinan, SGV co-founder Washington Sycip and San Miguel Corp. president Ramon Ang, had discussed the paper with both President Macapagal-Arroyo and opposition bet Fernando Poe Jr.

The paper outlines bold initiatives addressing the budget deficit, ballooning foreign debt, deteriorating competitiveness and crisis in investor confidence, widespread poverty and public cynicism.

The paper also contained a business sector commitment to put together a P100-million guaranty fund for poverty alleviation that will give lower-income Filipinos access to affordable credit.

When asked by the convenors about his plans, Poe had emphasized that he would combine honest leadership, transparency and sincerity, with a "*kamay na bakal*" (iron-fist). said Butch Jimenez, head of the 100-day Task Force.



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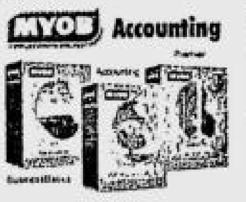

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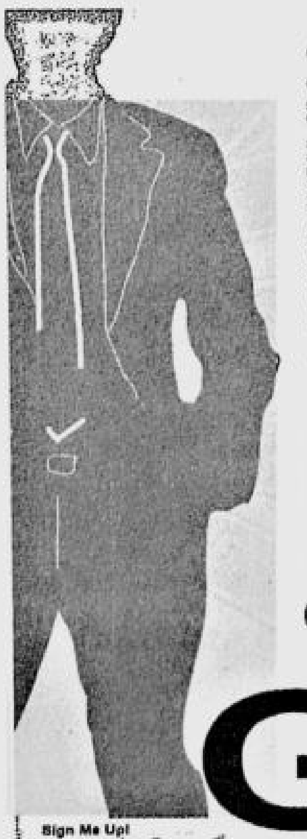

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Franco del Rosario is chairman of the 2004 Management Association of the Philippines Annual CEO Conference. He was chairman as well in 2003.

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COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

SERIOUS safety issues have been mounting on the operation of the Edsa light rail system that even the staff of Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza have been urging the ex-general to take more decisive measures before, knock on wood, any serious accident happens.

The heads of the planning, financial, legal and technical services of the Department of Transportation and Communication held a special workshop in December to propose a 60-day ultimatum on 12 safety, construction and financial issues that have been besetting the DOTC and Metro Rail Transit Corp.

Chief among their concern is the "excessive lateral movement," referring to the swaying of the trains, which had been noticed and brought to the attention of Metro Rail Transit chair Robert John Sobrepeña "as early as May 2000."

According to the grapevine, Metro Rail, to address the problem, ordered the train speed be reduced to 60 kilometer per hour from the specified 65 kph and the frequent lubrication of rails in tight curves.

Still, "(these) remedial measures, including the reprofiling the wheels ... are not in accordance with performance specifications and have been proven to be ineffective," according to the draft letter prepared by the staff for Mendoza's signature even before the December workshop.

The letter, as well as the "punchlist" of items that Metro Rail needs to address, including the non-replacement of stolen stray current collector/grounding cables that could cause a system-wide short circuit, has gathered dust in Mendoza's office.

Mendoza's staff also noted that there had been three Metro Rail passengers who had been injured in separate accidents but, in all these years, there still has been no clear provision as to extent of liability between Metro Rail as owner of the light rail facility and the DOTC/Metrostar Express as the operator.

The DOTC staff recommendation is that DOTC/Metrostar Express should secure comprehensive motor vehicle insurance cover but, in the same vein, noted that no funding has been allocated for such a "high cost" purpose in the government budget.

Despite the absence of such funding, Sobrepeña has already asked the DOTC to reimburse Metro Rail $4.1 million in insurance premium for 2003.

'News' for sale 2

AMBASSADOR to the United Kingdom Edgardo Espiritu denies that he has reached an understanding to sell the San Francisco-based Philippine News, as reported Friday in this column, to Manila Times publisher Dante Ang.

"To set the record straight, the majority ownership of the newspaper is not for sale now or in the future," Espiritu said in an e-mailed statement.

(Cocktales' reply: We stand by our story.)

The ex-banker/finance secretary clarified that he acquired the Fil-Am weekly in 1994, not during the Erap years.

As regards the Wincorp fiasco, Espiritu said his family divested of its entire 10-percent stake in the investment house in 1997, "long before the alleged default of borrowers brokered by Wincorp in the year 2000."

Movable target

PRICESMART has delayed anew the opening of its Parañaque branch; the new target would now be June 2004.

The San Diego, California-based warehouse chain did not give any reason for the delay. Located in the Aseana Business Park in the reclaimed area off Roxas Blvd., the new PriceSmart store was supposed to open early next month, from its original November 2003 inauguration date.

PriceSmart continues to encounter what analysts euphemistically call a challenging environment, its 25 warehouses in China and Third World locations including the Philippines reporting a consolidated 9.8-percent decrease in net sales in the six-month period to February.

Heard through the grapevine

CONSTRUCTION magnate Reghis Romero suspects container terminal tycoon Enrique Razon Jr. as behind the regulatory stumbling blocks being encountered by Romero's new Harbour Centre Port Terminal in Tondo.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

BSP, banks . . .

From page B1

past if there were an existing credit bureau that would have made banks more aware of any borrowers' outstanding liabilities.

He said a borrower who was being granted generous credit lines by different banks would usually be tempted to use all the funds and expand into riskier businesses. But if the banks knew that one borrower had an existing line with another bank, even without knowing the identity of the bank, the banks would know how much more to lend or whether to lend at all based on the borrower's net worth.

The BSP has been prodding the BAP to spearhead the creation of a national credit bureau given its own participation limits under its charter.

The creation of a centralized credit bureau is tied to the reforms being undertaken by the BSP to boost the benchmarks for capital adequacy in line with the standards of Basle-based Bank for International Settlements.

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Garments exports down 7.1% in 1st two months of 2004

By Ronnel W. Domingo

GARMENTS exports in February dropped 5.5 percent to $209 million from $221 million in the same period last year due to low volumes sent to the United States, the Garments and Textiles Export Board reported.

The agency said combined income figures for January and February also showed a 7.1-percent decline to $471 million from $507 million in the first two months of 2003.

Still, the garments industry was the biggest dollar earner from January to February, the GTEB added.

However, GTEB executive director Serafin Juliano expressed optimism that the numbers would improve in the coming months as the summer buying season peaked in the United States and importation for the fall season began.

Garments exports bound for the US in February dropped 10.7 percent to $148 million from $166 million in the same period last year, the Garments and Textiles Export Board reported.

The agency said revenues from US exports from January to February also showed a 10.5-percent decline to $334 million from $373 million in the first two months of 2003.

Jualino cited market analysis showing that what drove down February trading were stiff competition from emerging exporters in Mexico and China as well as the Americans' sustained safeguard measures in anticipation of a quota-free global market next year.

"(But) the resurgence in the US market brought about by rising consumer confidence will likely boost our garments exports in the coming months," Juliano said.

On the other hand, garments exports to Europe in February grew 23.9 percent to $29 million from $17 million in the same period last year.

Earnings from shipments to Europe in the first two months went up 8.8 percent to $71 million from $66 million a year ago.

GTEB data showed that trading of garments with France, Greece, Italy and Austria doubled while that with Great Britain and the Benelux countries—Belgium, The Netherlands and Luxembourg—grew by an average of 36 percent.

Industry experts said the strengthening of the euro and the steady recovery of European Union nations helped increase business with the European market.

Managing the debt

No Free Lunch

Cielito F. Habito

OUR government, no doubt, is spending too much to pay off debts, and too little for legitimate current needs. We have already cited government data showing that more than 4 out of every 5 pesos (81 percent) collected in revenues in 2004 will be paid out for interest and principal amortization of the government's outstanding debt. In proportion to expenditures, more than 3 out of every 5 pesos (62.4 percent) is expected to be paid for servicing the debt, almost evenly split between interest and principal payments.

The difference in percentages is due to the expected P198-billion difference between expenditures and revenue collections (i.e. the national government deficit) projected for 2004—which would in turn add further to the outstanding debt and debt service. Still, the amount of debt principal to be retired (P271 billion) is greater than the new debt to be incurred, which means we would have reduced total government debt by some P73 billion. Considering the total public sector debt of P5.39 trillion (as of September last year), we would be reducing outstanding debt and corresponding annual debt service only marginally, i.e. by a mere 1.3 percent.

Closing the gap

Addressing the debt problem thus calls for plugging the deficit at the soonest possible time. Waiting till 2009 to do so, which is the current target of the government, is perhaps realistic under current circumstances, but is rather unambitious and unaggressive. Taking the Department of Finance's own P240-billion estimate of annual revenues foregone from tax evasion and internal revenue leakages, we can eliminate the deficit within a year if the government can stop tax evasion and corruption in the revenue agencies alone. Given the right leadership, political will, and cooperation from the taxpaying public, this is not impossible.

Other revenue measures already in the pipeline could reportedly add close to P100 billion in new revenues, including the much-overdue indexation of the excise taxes on "sin products." With an estimated 150 million text messages sent by Filipinos everyday, about P55 billion is spent by Filipinos in text messages in a year. Imposing a special levy of say 50 centavos per text message would yield up to half that amount, subject to some reduction in volume due to the higher cost. I suspect the reduction would not be that large, though, as I see Filipinos' demand for texting to be rather inelastic. It is also time that we taxed more out of those who can well afford it, by imposing new taxes on visible wealth such as second (and third and fourth) homes, on privately owned yachts and aircraft, and so on.

Repudiation: suicide?

There has long been a clamor from certain sectors for the government to reject outright payments on debts originally incurred under questionable circumstances. The most prominent example is the Bataan nuclear power plant (BNPP), a mega-project of the Marcos years that was completed but never used due to a host of technical problems and risks, and for which the country reportedly continues to pay about $350,000 a day. Other "behest loans" incurred during the Marcos era have also been singled out by debt activists for repudiation.

The problem with repudiating debt is that it is a sure formula for shutting our country off from the financial markets. For as long as our country needs to borrow from international financial markets, it could be economic suicide to take such unilateral action on our obligations. No matter how immoral the circumstances under which they were incurred, debt obligations are commitments that must be honored. Certainly, there must be retribution from those responsible for the wrongdoing surrounding such loans, but maintaining the country's honor and dignity demands that our obligations be honored.

The same principle applies to so-called onerous contracts surrounding public projects (like the mothballed third airport terminal), which must be honored once signed and implemented. If any wrongdoing is indeed established by the courts, the erring contractors should certainly be penalized with the full force of the law, but the whole country's credibility suffers and its attractiveness as an investment site diminishes when implemented contracts are undone by the government. Commitments must be honored and the public interest should not be sacrificed by holding project implementation even in such cases.

Debt swaps: limited relief

Certain candidates have mentioned debt swaps as a possible instrument for reducing the country's debt. These are arrangements whereby the lender agrees to donate the payments for the loan to worthy development projects. In the case of a debt-for-nature swap (the most common type of debt swap we have had so far), the proceeds are earmarked for environmental protection projects. While these arrangements help, there is only so much debt reduction we can expect from this source. This is because the lender must agree to donate its receivable principal or interest payments to the country, and the borrower government must also agree to allocate the funds to the identified use. A debt swap is an outright grant on the part of the lender, but benevolence on the part of financial institutions has its limits.

Restructuring and debt relief

The markets reacted rather negatively when a leading presidential candidate indicated that he would push for a restructuring of the country's outstanding debt. In a way, the negative market reaction was unwarranted because given limited options, this is a recourse that must be explored by whoever becomes the next president of the country. Some say that the market reacted not so much to the idea of negotiated debt restructuring per se—which, after all, creditors have granted to other countries like Poland and Indonesia before—but more to the suspicion that the candidate concerned didn't know the difference between restructuring and repudiation.

But a negotiated and mutually agreed stretching out of debt payment terms and even a special grace period of 2-3 years is certainly an option that must be explored with the creditors. Indeed, the government would be remiss not to do so especially if it can convince the creditors that it has the credibility to effectively rechannel the freed up funds to legitimate priorities and productive use. This, after all, would serve to further strengthen the country's credit-worthiness and assure eventual repayment of its loan obligations.

Comments welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu

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1ST TIME IN 5 YRS

Food Terminal posts profit

By Christine A. Gaylican

FOR the first time in five years, state-owned Food Terminal Inc. posted a profit of P18 million last year.

"The renegotiation of contracts with existing tenants allowed us to adjust lease rates to current market rates. We are slowly implementing the changes," said National Food Authority Administrator Arthur C. Yap.

Yap said that turning the FTI into a profitable venture was a tedious process but "the fundamentals must be made attractive to private locators."

The NFA, which administers the food processing zone, is currently seeking official development assistance from foreign donors to put up a new water treatment and additional cold storage facilities in the FTI compound in Taguig.

"We are coordinating with the Neda (National Economic and Development Authority) on how to obtain ODA funding for these facilities," said Yap.

He also said the NFA was coordinating with the Privatization Management Office (PMO) for the possible sale of certain idle portions of the industrial estate. Certain contracts, found onerous, would be allowed to lapse.

Some 15,000 hectares of FTI property will likely be leased out or sold to information technology (IT) firms, Yap noted.

Yap added that PSI Technologies Inc. had signified interest in buying part of this FTI property.

Energy chief backs renewal of Veco franchise

CEBU City business community leaders hailed the resolution of a long-standing conflict among board members of Visayan Electric Co. (Veco), saying this will bring relief to the power supply situation in the area.

The Garcia and Aboitiz groups in the Veco board recently agreed to amicably settle their differences and cooperate in the management of its assets, franchise and businesses.

The business leaders said the resolution "will boost efforts to stabilize and further improve the city's power supply situation." Veco supplies all of the city's electricity requirements.

The Cebu City Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) earlier urged the government, through the Department of Energy, to "act quickly on the Veco issues." The row had threatened to jeopardize the renewal of the power distributor's franchise which expired last year.

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr., chair of the National Electrification Council, moved to grant Veco a provisional franchise renewal subject to the resolution of internal issues.

CCCI president Carlos Co said the early end of the row "sends hopes that there will be no brownouts in Cebu City, especially when demand peaks in summer."

The business community also cited the government's efforts to upgrade power transmission facilities saying these would assure them more reliable power supply.

They said the National Transmission Corporation (Transco) informed them that the government has started the transmission upgrading program involving a new substation in Metro Cebu.

Transco president Dr. Allan T. Ortiz said the P285.7 million project is expected to be completed by September this year.

Carlos Co led private sector support for DOE moves to address local power issues, including the efforts to upgrade power transmission facilities and the mediation by Perez in the Veco row.

Perez had urged the Aboitiz and Garcia groups to end the conflict soonest in support of the city's bid for business and investment expansion.

Ayala absorbs affiliate in Cebu

AYALA Corp. was given the go-signal by corporate regulators to absorb its wholly-owned Cebu-based subsidiary Mandaue Primeland Inc.

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) recently approved the merger between Ayala Corp. and Mandaue Primeland, that called for the transfer of all assets and liabilities of the property firm to Ayala Corp.

Sources said this is part of Ayala Corp.'s overall strategy to rationalize and consolidate its non-core investments.

In the company's stockholder's meeting last year, Ayala Corp.'s assumption of the assets of Mandaue Primeland and PF Prime Properties Inc. was ratified "to allow better monitoring and value creation."

As of December 2003, total assets of Ayala Corp. stood at P98.17 million. Total assets of Mandaue Primeland on the other hand was at P37.5 million.

Mandaue Primeland owns a 4,280-square-meter property in Mandaue City which it leases to an Isuzu dealer in Cebu.

Ayala Corp. earlier posted a 28-percent jump in net income to P3.1 billion in 2003 from P2.4 billion in 2002.

It also marked a return to profit in the fourth quarter after buying a bigger stake in Globe Telecom.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

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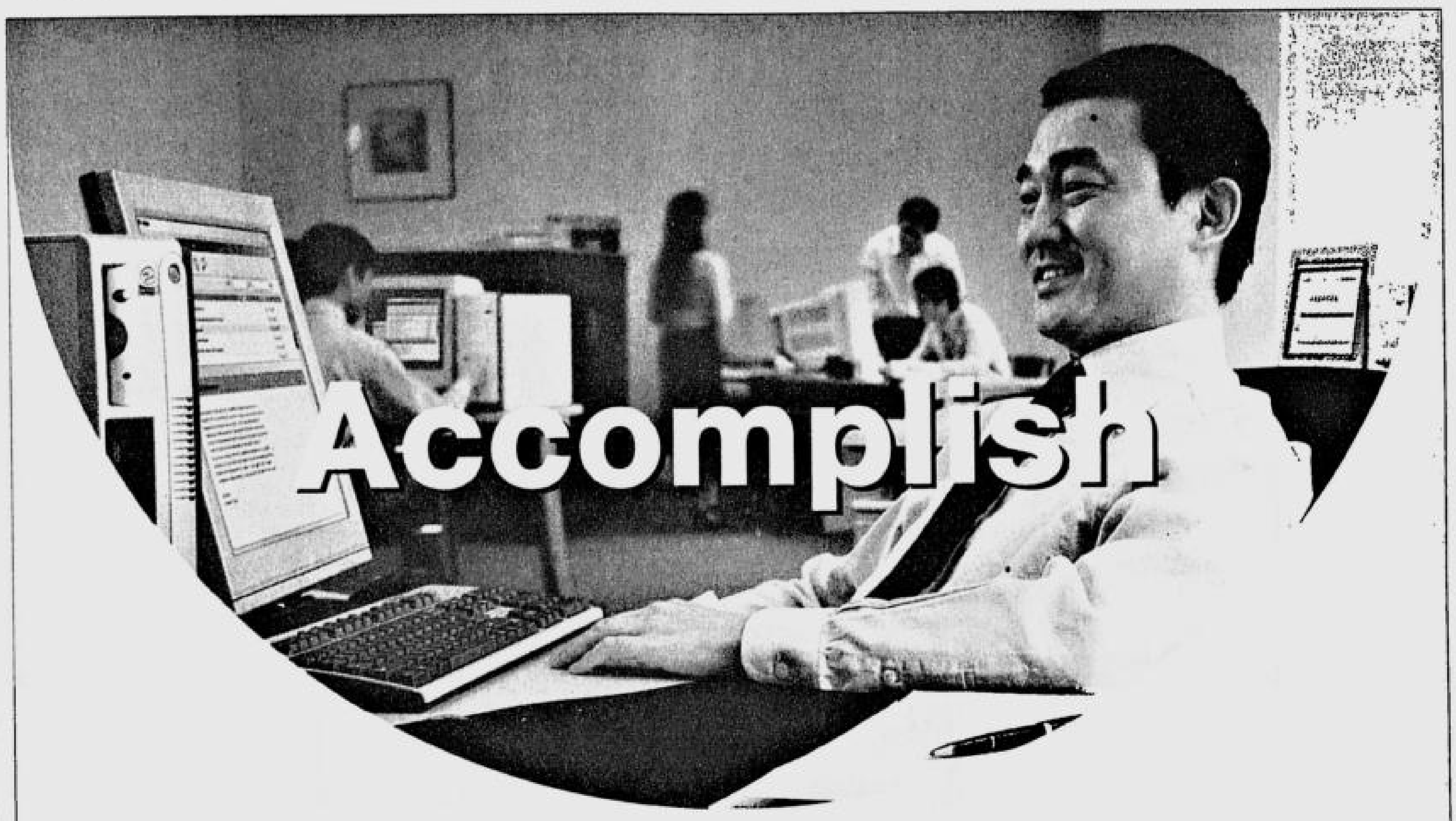

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ABS-CBN to pursue listing of subsidiary in Singapore

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

DOMINANT television network ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. is optimistic it can offer shares of its international programming unit ABS-CBN Global in the Singapore stock market in the next two years as it firms up plans to boost the profitability of this subsidiary.

ABS-CBN chief financial officer Randy Estrellado said the Lopez-controlled network has not shelved plans of a possible maiden public offering for ABS-CBN Global at the Stock Exchange of Singapore.

"We are not shelving the IPO (initial public offering). We are not yet qualified since there is a three-year net income requirement. We are just meeting the three-year track record so we can list," Estrellado said.

Should its listing push through, ABS-CBN Global will join the likes of Philippine companies Ionics EMS and Fastech Synergy which are already listed in Singapore.

Estrellado explained that ABS-CBN Global's North American operations have been showing profits for the last two years.

With the launch of ABS-CBN Europe just last year, ABS-CBN Global has yet to show consolidated profit.

He added that ABS-CBN aims to get a larger chunk of the overseas Filipino viewership, already capturing 1.3 million Filipino viewers to date out of the estimated seven million in various countries.

"That is like a penetration rate of 19 percent. We 'd like to double that in the next five years," Estrellado said.

ABS-CBN Global's net sales and services last year accounted for 65 percent of the parent company's total net sales.

Net sales for ABS-CBN Global expanded 24 percent to P2.37 billion in 2003 from P1.92 billion the previous year.

Bulk of ABS-CBN Global's revenue is from subscription fees for its cable and direct-to-home (DTH) service. Of its total 1.3 million viewership base, 53 percent are in North America.

An increase in DTH fees by 15 percent to $24 boosted revenue for the company since a fourth TV channel was included in the lineup of DTH subscribers. Growth in subscribers, however, was tempered by lower installation revenue since the company slashed its prices to increase subscriber penetration rates.

GMA-7 sees 50% growth in net profit this year

GMA Network Inc. expects to surpass its 2003 net profit of P1.05 billion by 50 percent this year.

GMA senior vice president for corporate services Felipe Yalong said the network saw higher revenue from its television and radio operations and from its international channel, which is set to be launched in the next few months.

GMA will also re-open its UHF or ultra-high frequency channel and start producing movies again this year.

The growth in net earnings last year was 162 percent or P650 million from the P402 million earned in 2002. The broadcast giant also increased its gross revenue by 48 percent to P6.24 billion from P4.23 billion last year.

Higher production costs and talent fees bloated its operating expenses by 25 percent.

GMA traced the higher production costs to the introduction of more "innovative shows." The network also set aside a higher budget for last year's programs.

Before interest and other charges, earnings stood at P2.28 billion or 74 percent higher than 2002.

The company said it was also optimistic it would be debt free by the end of 2005.

Ronaldo P. Mastrili, GMA vice president for finance, had said the company's total outstanding debt stood at P1 billion. Half of this would mature this year and would be financed internally from operations. The other P500 million would fall due in 2005 and would also be paid in cash from operations.

Once debt-free by 2005, the company could raise additional capital from an initial public offering or through possible borrowings. The company said it was ready to offer its shares to the public but was waiting for stock market conditions to improve.

The network is controlled by three families—the Duavits and Jimenezes hold 35 percent each while the Gozon family owns 30 percent.
Elizabeth L. Sanchez

JG Summit profit for 2003 steady at P2.3B-P2.4B

By Clarissa S. Batino

JG Summit Corp. controlled by the Gokongwei family has managed to keep its net profit last year steady at between P2.3 billion and P2.4 billion from P2.36 billion in 2002 despite higher expenses for its telecom and airline units.

A company official said earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization reached about P14 billion.

This year, the JG Summit official said the company was looking to bring in about P3 billion in net profit.

The official said that most of the major businesses managed to contribute to the profit although increased spending to expand Digital Telecommunications Philippines Inc. and Cebu Pacific pared down the gains from the other units.

Aside from telecom and airlines, JG Summit is engaged in food manufacturing through Universal Robina Corp., real estate and malls through Robinson's Land Corp., petrochemicals through JG Summit Petrochemical Corp., and textile manufacturing through Litton Mills Inc.

An official noted that aside from increased expenditures, the company was hit by rising interest rates and a depreciating peso.

Digitel posted a net loss of P722.8 million from January to September last year as revenue from the fixed-line, data and Internet services dropped.

James Go, chair of JG Summit, said that Digitel would spend $250 million to double the network capacity of its wireless business Sun Cellular. The funds would be raised from a blend of multilateral loans and other borrowings.

He said Sun Cellular was targeting to grow its subscriber base to 2 million this year from about 700,000 in 2003, its first year of operations. The phone subsidiary is likely to stay in the red this year but officials hoped that it would at least break even in 2005.

Cebu Pacific also suffered a net loss of P29.6 million in the first three quarters, reversing a P234-million profit a year ago as travel slowed down due to the SARS scare.

The airline is planning to fly to China on a regular basis and establish a Manila-Japan route as part of its regional expansion. Cebu Air flies to Hong Kong daily and to Seoul, Korea, twice a week from Manila and Cebu. It also offers chartered flights to Xiamen and Guangzhou in China.

Last Thursday, JG Summit told its stockholders that it would issue P800 million worth of preferred shares to help finance an estimated P20 billion in capital expenditures for the year.

The bulk of the capital expenses would go to Sun Cellular so it could compete more aggressively with Globe and Smart whose subscriber base has exceeded 8 million and 13 million, respectively.

Some of the money the company plans to raise would expand the facilities of the manufacturing arm and to construct new malls.

Universal Robina Corp. will start the construction of its $10-million food manufacturing plant in Vietnam later this year and will start selling its snack foods in the country next year.

Trading seen to remain weak

From page B1

Adding to the burden is the slight increase in non-performing loans in January at 14.7 percent of total bank loans against 14.1 percent in December because of low loan growth.

"There is no major policy change in the next few days that would indicate some direction for the market. Our basic view is a consolidation phase. Nothing out there is getting us hopeful for earnings growth. The sharp rise in interest rates, cost of capital is also rising therefore depressing stock values," the analyst said.

Other analysts said there may be some interest in Lopez companies given the recent government takeover of private water distributor Maynilad Water Services Inc. and the resulting write-off of Benpres' investments in the company.

With Maynilad's unpaid concession fees amounting to P8 billion, the government stands to get a 61-percent stake in Maynilad. Maynilad, which supplies water to the west zone of Metro Manila, was ordered by a Paris-based arbitration panel to pay the overdue amount last year. Maynilad later filed a petition in a local court seeking debt relief and corporate rehabilitation.

Benpres is controlled by the Lopez family, which also has huge stakes in ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp., Manila Electric Co. and First Philippine Holdings Corp.

"It reduces the debt problem of Benpres and it would improve return on equity for the company," Team Research's analyst said.

"But beyond that, financing for Benpres or access to debt markets for Lopez companies should ease up slightly, since this should give them more access," the analyst added. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 19, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	20,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17.75	18	17.75	18	75,800
Bank of the Phil. Islands	45	45	45	45	312,000
China Banking Corp.	670	670	670	670	30
Citystate Savings Bank	16.25	16.25	16.25	16.25	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	39	39	38.5	39	28,000
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.57	0.58	0.57	0.57	290,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	24.5	24.5	24.25	24.5	85,000
Prudential Bank	400	400	400	400	2,000
Philippine National Bank	23.5	23.5	23.25	23.25	27,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	25.5	26	25.5	26	62,900
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	50,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	180	180	180	180	10
Manulife Financial Corp.	1955	1955	1955	1955	500
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1455	1455	1455	1455	300
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	23	23.25	23	23	39,300
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.68	0.68	0.67	0.67	520,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	855	855	850	850	22,750
ISM Communications Corp.	0.037	0.038	0.036	0.037	2,500,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	23,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	1.72	1.76	1.7	1.76	21,676,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	945	945	930	930	161,670
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.013	0.011	0.013	420,300,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	18.75	19.25	18.75	19.25	119,400
Manila Electric Co. B	29.5	30.5	29.5	30.5	822,200
Petron Corp.	2.95	3.05	2.95	3	3,011,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	200,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc	1.26	1.26	1.24	1.24	100,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3	3	3	3	35,000
Negros Navigation Co. Inc.	0.36	0.4	0.36	0.4	650,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	600,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.48	1.52	385,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3	3	3	3	1,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	5,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	28.5	28.5	28.5	28.5	12,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	17.25	17.25	17	17	1,437,400
San Miguel Corp. A	57	57	56.5	57	128,900
San Miguel Corp. B	70	71	70	71	428,700
Universal Robina Corp.	6.5	6.6	6.5	6.5	98,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	200,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	260,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	30,000
Ayala Corp.	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	23,182,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.021	0.022	0.02	0.022	2,900,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1	1	1	1	110,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	7,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	20,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.55	0.57	0.54	0.56	26,270,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp	21.25	22	21.25	22	248,800
Ionics Inc.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	248,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	500,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	500,000
Medco Holdings	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	60,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.02	1.02	1	1	179,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.27	5,820,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.86	0.86	0.85	0.86	130,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	14	14	14	14	900
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Cen Azucar de Tarlac	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	10,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	40,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	50,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.49	0.5	530,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	320,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp (Pdr)	23.25	23.5	23.25	23.5	255,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	1,500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT 10% Pref Series Bb	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	200
Philweb Corp. - Warrants	0.0002	0.0002	0.0002	0.0002	50,000,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.5	5.5	5.4	5.5	11,933,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	10,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	350,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1	1	1	1	11,120,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.17	0.17	0.165	0.165	6,750,000
SM Development Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	189,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.7	5,236,000
MINING					
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	5,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.25	0.25	0.24	0.24	610,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	4,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0026	0.0026	0.0026	0.0026	7,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	500,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	10,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	9,000,000
Pacifica	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	6,000,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	955,540	23,335,175.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	572,142,320	485,103,130.00
PRO	35,588,000	107,979,500.00
Mining	12,115,000	391,400.00
OIL	25,000,000	169,000.00
GRAND TOTALS :	645,800,860	616,978,205.00
	AVERAGES	
Bank & Fin Svc	429.53	UP 1.25
Comm'l & Ind'l	2,269.05	UP 6.79
PRO	513.73	DOWN 0.94
Mining	1,424.87	UP 0.53
OIL	1.19	UNCH 0.00
SME	100.00	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	919.31	UP 1.92
Composite	1,450.83	UP 2.77

NO. OF ADVANCES: 26, NO. OF DECLINES: 18, NO. OF UNCHANGED: 39, NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 83, NO. OF TRADES: 1,659

CURRENCIES

March 21, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.806777	1.000000	56.2580
Japan	Yen	0.007560	0.009371	0.5272
United Kingdom	Pound	1.480274	1.834800	103.2222
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.103534	0.128330	7.2196
Switzerland	Franc	0.642031	0.795798	44.7700
Canada	Dollar	0.607284	0.752729	42.3470
Singapore	Dollar	0.477835	0.592277	33.3203
Australia	Dollar	0.604418	0.749176	42.1471
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.140048	2.652590	149.2294
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.215146	0.266674	15.0025
Brunei	Dollar	0.476424	0.590528	33.2219
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000094	0.000117	0.0066
Thailand	Baht	0.020503	0.025413	1.4297
UAE	Dirham	0.219656	0.272264	15.3170
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.239500	69.7318
Argentina	Peso	0.279888	0.346921	19.5171
Brazil	Real	0.276482	0.342700	19.2796
Denmark	Kroner	0.134264	0.166420	9.3625
India	Rupee	0.017845	0.022119	1.2444
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.212338	0.263193	14.8067
Mexico	New Peso	0.073560	0.091178	5.1295
New Zealand	Dollar	0.529902	0.656814	36.9510
Norway	Kroner	0.117466	0.145599	8.1911
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014056	0.017422	0.9801
South Africa	Rand	0.121548	0.150659	8.4758
Korea	Won	0.000697	0.000864	0.0486
Sweden	Kroner	0.108123	0.134018	7.5396
Syria	Pound	0.015635	0.019380	1.0903
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024426	0.030276	1.7033
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000421	0.000522	0.0294

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clubshares
As of March 22, 2004

CLUB	BUYER	SELLER
Capitol Hills	-	180,000
Celebrity Sports Club	-	250,000
Eagleridge "A"	-	270,000
Fairways & Blue Water "C1"	-	320,000
Fontana "D"	-	70,000
Forest Hills "A"	130,000	185,000
Forest Hills "B"	170,000	210,000
Manila Polo	2,200,000	-
Makati Sports Club "A"	-	250,00
Punta Fuego	400,000	-
Riviera "C"	-	180,000
Rockwell Club	300,000	370,000
Royale Tagaytay	-	70,000
Sherwoods "A"	-	100,000
Tagaytay Midlands	-	700,000
Tagaytay Country Club	310,000	380,000
Wack Wack Golf Club	6,400,000	-

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G & W clubshares
As of March 22, 2004

BEST BUYS

Alabang Country Club A	1,100,000
Alabang Country Club B	1,200,000
Baguio Country Club	640,000
Manila Southwoods A	420,000
Orchard A	165,000
Sherwoods A	60,000

FREE PLAYING RIGHTS

OTHER SHARES AVAILABLE

CLUB	SELLER	BUYER
Alta Vista	-	200,000
Calatagan Golf	70,000	-
Canlubang Golf	430,000	-
Canyonwoods	140,000	-
Camp John Hay	240,000	150,000
Capitol Hills	160,000	130,000
Cebu Country Club	-	1,230,000
Club Filipino	-	120,000
Eagleridge A/B/"C"*	280,000*	-
Eastridge A/B*	-	70,000/90,000*
Manila Golf Ind/Corp.*	-	9,500,000
Manila Polo	2,400,000	2,250,000
Makati Sports Club	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Metropolitan Club	110,000	70,000
Mimosa C2	250,000	-
Mimosa Golf Ind.	180,000	120,000
Punta Fuego	-	400,000
Riviera Golf A	120,000	100,000
Rockwell Leisure Club	390,000	-
Royale Tagaytay CC	Pls. Call	-
Sta Elena A	Pls. Call	1,100,000
Tagaytay Country Club	-	310,000
Tagaytay Highlands Golf	830,000	-
Tagaytay Midlands	700,000	-
The Country Club	2,000,000	-
Valley Golf & CC	280,000	-
Valle Verde Ind.	140,000	-
Wack Wack Golf	6,700,000	6,300,000

Tel. 8504151-52/8092038/8426731
7723246-49/(0917)3287789
E-mail:gwclubshares@pacific.net.ph

GG & A Club Shares
SEC License Broker #007575 * As of March 22, 2004

CLUB	BUYER	SELLER
Alabang Country Club "A" (Filipino)	1,000,000	1,200,000
Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	1,100,000	1,300,000
Baguio Country Club	600,000	700,000
Camp John Hay	-	220,000
Canlubang	-	500,000
Capitol Hills	125,000	135,000
Cebu Country Club	1,100,000	Please Call
Celebrity Sports Club	-	170,000
Club Filipino	100,000	170,000
Eagleridge "A"	220,000	270,000
Eagleridge "B"	280,000	350,000
Eagleridge "C"	300,000	350,000
Forest Hills "A"	-	180,000
Forest Hills "B"	-	230,000
Forest Hills "C"	-	250,000
Makati Sports Club "A"	200,000	240,000
Makati Sports Club "B"	-	250,000
Manila Golf (Corporate)	10,500,000	-
Manila Golf (Individual)	9,500,000	10,400,000
Manila Polo	2,250,000	2,500,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	350,000	430,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	500,000	550,000
Manila Yacht Club	250,000	400,000
Metroclub "A"	100,000	110,000
Mimosa (Corporate)	250,000	275,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "A"	150,000	Please Call
Mt. Malarayat Gold "C"	320,000	350,000
Orchard Golf Club "C"	250,000	330,000
Quezon City Sports Club	-	200,000
Riviera Golf Club "A"	-	90,000
Riviera Golf Club "B"	-	110,000
Riviera Golf Club "C"	-	125,000
Sherwood Hills "A"	-	70,000
Sherwood Hills "C"	-	180,000
Rockwell	280,000	380,000
Spa & Lodge	-	600,000
Sta. Elena "A"	1,160,000	1,400,000
Sta. Elena "B"	1,400,000	-
Subic Bay Yacht (Corporate)	150,000	180,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Individual)	-	120,000
Tagaytay Country Club	310,000	330,000
Tagaytay Highlands	750,000	800,000
Tagaytay Midlands	-	670,000
Valle Verde (Individual)	100,000	125,000
Valle Verde (Corporate)	170,000	250,000
Valley Golf	230,000	300,000
Wack-Wack Golf Club	6,500,000	6,700,000

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GSIS bank board members at odds over Puyat shares

By Michelle V. Remo

BOARD members of the GSIS Family Bank are at odds over the issue of whether to return to the Puyat estate millions-of-peso worth of shares that the bank is allegedly withholding illegally.

The Puyat estate consists of businesses run by the heirs of the late Sen. Gil Puyat Sr.

A source privy to the matter said board chair Sanchez Ali, president Marcos Catalan and director Eduardo De Los Angeles want the shares returned to the Puyats, saying the bank has no right over the withheld shares. Five other board members are either for delaying the return of the shares until further study or opposed to returning the shares, the source said.

In a recent meeting of the 15-man board, the three in favor of the return of the shares were outvoted as five opposed the move. The other board members were absent.

The contested 345,717 shares of various companies were pledged by the late senator and his associates from 1980 to 1983 to then Royal Savings Bank (renamed ComSavings Bank in 1984 and is now GSIS Family Bank) to secure P5.1 million worth of loans for the operation of firms belonging to the Puyat estate.

When the senator died in 1982, the administrators of the Puyat estate published an advertisement calling creditors to make formal claims.

ComSavings Bank failed to file any claim or foreclose the pledged shares.

The Puyat estate said it was not able to settle the obligation because it was not aware of the loan until recently.

Citing provisions of the Civil Code, the Puyats said they remained the rightful owners of the shares because failure to foreclose pledged assets within 10 years after the loan fell due took away the right of a creditor to take possession of the assets.

"The Puyats want the shares returned not because they are interested in the money, but because they want to keep the good name of their father and to clarify once and for all who the real owner of the shares is. Once returned, they want the proceeds of the shares donated to charitable institutions," said David So, a representative of the Puyats.

So said the Puyats only want to secure the 49,813 shares registered directly under the name of the old senator. He said the heirs were proposing that the rest of the over 300,000 shares be given to a charitable organization of the GSIS Family Bank's choice.

Lawyer Eladio Samson, speaking for the Puyats, said the family was set to file corruption charges against the bank's board members if they would fail to return the shares within the week.

Time for a consumer revolt

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

OVER the past few months, the Filipino consumer has been battered black and blue by high prices. It is time for the consumer to fight back and mount a revolt.

First, it was the price of chicken. Last Christmas, the price soared to an unheard of P140 per kilo. This was apparently the result of an agreement between the cartel of chicken raisers on one hand and a bogus consumer watch group (headed by one of the biggest chicken raisers in the country, no less) on the other. The pact was forged in the air-conditioned confines of a government office and was anchored on the 40-percent tax on imported chicken (as compared to 20 percent on imported jewelry).

The dastardly plot was foiled when intrepid smugglers landed in Batangas a shipload of Thai chicken parts in 40-foot containers. Customs Commissioner Tony Bernardo went on his horse to chase chicken legs all over Southern Tagalog and Metro Manila.

Then, it was pork. In a meeting in the air-conditioned confines of the same government agency, hog raisers and traders agreed to raise the price. Then, the traders accused the raisers of charging farm gate prices that were more than what was agreed upon. The raisers declared a "pig holiday" and did not supply hogs to Metro Manila for one day. Pork now sells at the unheard of P150 a kilo.

Finally, the jeepneys staged their *welga ng bayan* to press their demand for higher fares. As in the past, the jeepney owners could not quite pull off their vaunted nationwide strike. But there were reports of thousands of passengers who could not get a ride for hours.

The Filipino consumer has been battered enough. It is time to fight back and rise in revolt. Remember, we consumers have the upper hand. Where there are no consumers, there will be no suppliers. Let us wield our strongest weapon: boycott.

Let us boycott chicken and pork. After all, they are not staple foods. I love fried chicken but I can live without it. *Sinampalukan manok* is one of my favorites, but there is always fish *sinigang*. As to pork, many of us are on a low-fat diet anyway. Our Muslim brothers go through life without eating pork. A Bicolano like me can go on for weeks on *laing* and all those other wondrous dishes awash in thick coconut milk.

Let us consider the vulnerability of our arrogant suppliers. When a chicken is 45 days old, it has to be sold. Otherwise, the raiser starts losing money. The rate of increase in weight no longer pays for the increase in feed consumption. The same is true with hogs. When the weight of a hog reaches 120 kilos, the point of diminishing return has been reached. The rate of increase in weight slows down while the rate of feed consumption continues to go up. The operator of a fleet of jeepneys may have the money to tide him over during a strike, but his drivers cannot afford to miss even a day's wages.

What if we consumers take a couple of weekdays from our annual vacation leave, and just stay home? Anyway, by the end of the month, school will be out, and the children will be home. Spend the whole day watching Cartoon Network with the kids.

Nobody takes a ride in a jeepney or bus. Nobody takes his car out of the garage. Nobody goes to the *palengke*, to the shopping malls, to the movies or to the park. Metro Manila will be completely shut down. With no demand, those high chicken and pork prices cannot hold up. And those jeepney operators will have a healthier respect for their passengers.

Will some activist women's group, say, Gabriela, sound the call? Protesting against high commodity prices is right down their alley.

Rise, fellow consumers! We have nothing to lose but high prices!

AYALA LAND INC.

NOTICE OF REGULAR ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the regular annual meeting of stockholders of AYALA LAND, INC. will be held at the Rizal Ballroom, Makati Shangri-La Hotel, Ayala Ave. cor Makati Ave., Makati City, on **Wednesday, 24 March 2004 at 9:00 a.m.** with the following

AGENDA

1. Proof of Notice and Determination of Quorum
2. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting
3. Annual Report
4. New Business
   - 4.1 Ratification of all Acts and Resolutions of the Board of Directors and of the Executive Committee adopted in the ordinary course of business during the preceding year.
5. Election of Directors (including the Independent Directors)
6. Election of Auditors and Fixing of their Remuneration
7. Consideration of such other business as may properly come before the meeting
8. Adjournment

Only stockholders of record at the close of business on **5 February 2004** are entitled to notice of, and to vote at, this meeting. As per By-Laws, the Stock and Transfer Books of the Corporation will be closed from **5 to 12 February 2004**, inclusive. For your convenience in registering your attendance, please bring your Stockholders' Identification Card and present the same at the registration desk at the entrance lobby of the Rizal Ballroom, Makati Shangri-La Hotel. Registration will start at 7.00 a.m.

Makati City, 09 February 2004

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NATIONAL WATER FORUM 2004

MARCH 22, 2004
Century Park Hotel
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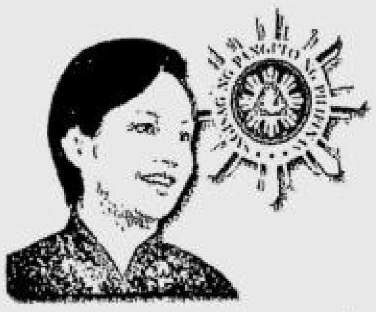
"Securing our Future: Effectively Managing Water Now"



My warmest congratulations to the organizers of the ***World Water Day***, led by the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), especially for convening the National Water Forum that will tackle the water-related problems of supply and quality, food production, disaster mitigation and demand management.

Water is a basic necessity of life. As population and economic activities grow, there is increasing demand and competition for water resources. Thus, many countries experience water scarcity and limits to development. An estimate of 450 million people suffer from water shortages so in 1992, the United Nations General Assembly designated March 22 of each year as ***World Water Day.***

This year's World Water Day theme, ***"Water and Disasters"***, is very relevant to countries like ours because water after all can inflict great damage. The World Meteorological Organization reports that weather and climate-related events such as storms, floods and droughts account for 75 % of all disasters. The recent Ormoc tragedy and the landslides in Panaon, Leyte are proof of nature's power over mankind and taught us the valuable lesson of properly managing our ecological and water resources. Thus, to prevent similar tragedies, we have completed the geo-hazard maps for Region 5, 8 and 13 which identify disaster-prone areas to guide settlement plans and disaster-preparedness activities. The maps for the other regions, together with a community based early warning system, will soon be finished.

Metro Manila is now experiencing a water shortage but we were able to minimize water disruptions and have recently issued Administrative Order No. 94 which provides decisive measures on water leaks and pilferages, conservation, development of new water sources and use of treated wastewater for Metro Manila. The recently passed bill on Clean Water, which I shall sign into law today, is expected to decisively tackle the issue of water pollution and provides for increased utilization of our limited water resources.

Access to safe and sufficient water is now recognized as a basic human right. Commitments and actions are necessary to achieve the Millennium Development Goal to halve the number of people living without safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015. To do this, we must always strive to develop policies that allow for the efficient and equitable use of water. Our water problems can only be met by changes in management and governance that leads to the sustainable use of shared resources.

As we celebrate World Water Day, I urge every Filipino to join me in protecting the resource base on which life ultimately depends.

Gloria Arroyo
GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President, Republic of the Philippines

Water is vital to life. Rapid population growth, urbanization and increasing demands of agriculture and industry, however, are placing great strains on this limited resource.

We are faced with the twin problems of resource and resource management. The Philippines has limited water resources. It is estimated that only 1,907 cubic meters of fresh water is available to each person per year. This ratio ranks the Philippines as second to the lowest among Southeast Asian countries in fresh water availability. Thus, it is important that we conserve water - we should not only have enough of it for all, but we should have it in good quality.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources welcomes the holding of a National Water Forum at a time when the need to manage our water resources responsibly has once again been highlighted. This gathering will focus on a wide range of issues, among them are integrated water management, domestic water supply and sanitation, water for food and rural development, water-related disaster and risk mitigation, and water demand management.

My hope is that through this Forum, the participants, including representatives from national government agencies, local government units, the private sector and civil society, can discuss the problem of degradation of our water resources in an open and candid atmosphere, and able to come up with doable and practical solutions, both in the short and long term, for the efficient, equitable and sustainable use of water resources and services.

The National Water Forum coincides with the observance of World Water Day. This is truly appropriate, for we need to highlight concerted efforts at both the national and international levels to address the problem of unsustainable water resource use. Global cooperation is inevitable because individual countries alone cannot solve the world's water problems. At the end of the day, what is important is that we must all join hands to make sure that every drop counts.

I wish the sucess of the National Water Forum. Mabuhay.

Elisea G. Gozun
ELISEA G. GOZUN
Secretary, DENR

NATIONAL WATER FORUM
Securing our Future: Effectively Managing Water Now

The Philippines water resources include inland fresh water such as rivers, lakes and groundwater as well as marine which includes bay, coastal and oceanic waters.

In a study conducted by the World Bank, just over 36 percent of the country's river systems are classified as sources of public water supply and that up to 58 percent of groundwater sampled is contaminated with coliform and needs treatment.

The government is intensifying its efforts to improve the country's water quality. With the signing of the Clean Water Act, a comprehensive water management program will be implemented and more stringent mechanisms will be put in place.

THE NATIONAL WATER FORUM

Today, the National Water Resources Board, chaired by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources will lead the National Water Forum which aims to present and discuss the priority actions and policy in the water resources sector.

The holding of the Forum is in consonance with the Ministerial Declaration during the 1st Ministerial Meeting on "Managing Water Resources", held in Japan in 2003 which highlights the implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management taking into consideration the critical role of water resources in the country's socio-economic development.

Coinciding with the World Water Day celebration, some 300 participants, consisting of foreign and local environment and water experts, decision-makers and representatives from concerned government agencies, non-government organizations, and international organizations will participate in the forum and identify viable projects to protect and improve the country's water resources.

The World Water Day is an initiative that grew out of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro. The United Nations General Assembly designated March 22 of each year as the World Day for water.

The Forum is being sponsored by the World Bank-Water and Sanitation Program, the Australian Government, the United Nation's Development Programme and Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System.

WATER WEEK CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES
(March 22-26, 2004)

March 22 - National Water Forum (NWRB as lead convenor)
Theme: "Securing our Future: Effectively Managing Water Now"
8:00 AM - Century Park, Malate, Manila
2:00 PM - Malacañang, Manila

March 23 - General Assembly, Election and Forum
Theme: "Water and Disaster"
Organized by Philippine Water Parnership
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Galleria Suites, Ortigas Center, Pasig City

Symposium on 54th World/139th National Meteorological Day
Theme: "Weather and Water in the Information Age"
Organized by PAGASA
9:00 AM
Conference Room, PAGASA Central Office Bldg. 1
Agham Road, Quezon City

March 24 - Mini-lecture on Water for Grade VI and 1st year HS students;
visit to Balara and La Mesa Dam
Organized by Philippine Waterworks Association and
MWSS-Corporate Office

March 25 - Water District Forum and Awards Night
Sponsored by LWUA
Club Filipino, San Juan, Rizal

8th Meeting of the Board of Trustees
Philippine National Committee of International
Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (PNC-ICID)
12:00 NN - 3:00 PM
NIA Boardroom, 3/F Bldg. B, NIA Complex
EDSA, Quezon City

March 26 - NWRB's 30th Anniversary Program
9:00 AM
8/F NIA Bldg., EDSA, Diliman, Quezon City

March 22-26 - World Water Day celebration exhibit
DENR - Main Lobby
Visayas Ave., Diliman Quezon City

IPP offers incentives to new industries

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE RECENTLY approved 2004 Investment Priorities Plan has lined up incentives for new businesses including medical tourism, environment protection services and petrochemicals.

Prepared by the Board of Investments, the IPP is an annual plan that determines priority economic activities and the corresponding products and services entitled to incentives.

Trade Secretary Cesar V. Purisima, who also sits as BOI chair, said last week that there was great potential in the medical tourism business.

"We want to develop medical tourism since our health care service industry provides quality service at competitive rates not only in Asia but worldwide," Purisima said.

Purisima had earlier talked of promoting the country as a world destination for medical services.

He noted that the aging of populations in developed countries was creating opportunities for the Philippines to market its medical expertise and related services.

He also said last week that the 2004 IPP encourages businesses to install vital facilities that will help preserve the environment.

These include testing and measuring services for industrial and institutional sources of air and water pollutants and other related services for machinery and equipment.

"We want to further develop the country's packaging facilities that use high technology and brand new equipment. These are vital to some sectors, especially the food industry," Purisima said.

He added that incentives are again being offered to petrochemical ventures such as naphtha crackers and polymerization plants, which produce raw materials for the plastics industry.

Taiwanese bathroom firm expands production capacity

BATHROOM fixtures maker Hocheng Philippines Corp. is investing $5.5 million or P308 million to double the production capacity of its factory in Cavite, a company official said.

Hocheng vice president Steve Chien said in a press briefing that the company's plant in the First Cavite Industrial Estate would start operating on increased capacity by May.

Chien also said the company sold P850 million worth of HCG branded fixtures last year, an increase of 18 percent from P720 million in 2002.

"Our sales figures for 2003 is a record in our (eight years of) operation," the executive said. "We hope to post even higher numbers with the expansion of production capacity."

"With increased production, we believe we can sell a total of P1.1 billion worth of fixtures in 2004," Chien added.

The plant used to produce 700,000 pieces of ceramic toilet bowls, water tanks and lavatories a year.

This would go up to a million pieces this year and reach 1.4 million pieces in 2005 when the expanded facility begins operating at full capacity.

Chien added that the capacity expansion would mean a similar growth in the company's workforce from 550 employees last July to about 900.

Hocheng's 10-hectare facility in Cavite is Taiwan-based Hocheng Group's (HCG) production hub.

"Locally made HCG products are well accepted in (20 countries) where we are present, including the United States and Canada," he said.

Chien said Hocheng last year had the largest share in the local bathroom fixtures market at 35 percent. *Ronnel W. Domingo*

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How well do you share? RICOH Image Communication

Rural banks urged to enter microfinance

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE RURAL Bankers Association of the Philippines has urged its members to extend financing to micro-entrepreneurs.

In a briefing last Friday, RBAP said it was promoting the Microenterprise Access to Banking Services (MABS) program, a joint effort with the US-AID which was pilot-tested in Mindanao and bore good results.

The MABS program aims to expand the number of participant bank units to 180, including new banks in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao and conflict areas of Mindanao.

It also seeks to increase the number of micro-borrowers served by MABS to at least 57,500 and micro-depositors to 200,000.

The loan size averages at P12,000 to P13,000 but the banks' loans were as low as P5,000 at the start of the program.

Unlike other microfinance lending models like the Grameen strategy which focuses on group borrowers, MABS program deputy chief Meliza Agabin said the approach applies to both group and individual lenders.

"There is no one-size-fits-all product. The banks can introduce their own product," Agabin said.

The MABS approach relies on market research—done through area mapping, data gathering and market surveys rather than peer references—to seek eligible borrowers.

It banks on micro-borrowers with existing businesses who can afford to pay back their loans.

Target borrowers are wet market vendors, small retailers, cottage industries and manufacturers.

"We also target enterprises that do processing because these are the ones with the potential to employ more people," she said.

The MABS program was pioneered in Mindanao in 1998, with 26 banks embracing the micro-financing model.

The banks using the MABS model currently devote an average of 10-17 percent of their portfolio for microfinance.

Resort owners decry lack of gov't support

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

BORACAY ISLAND, Aklan—Despite the increasing number of tourist arrivals, resort owners here said the government was not doing enough to attract more foreign visitors.

"Few people in other countries know about Boracay," said Henry Chusuey, chair of the board of directors of the Boracay Foundation Inc., composed of about 105 owners of resorts, restaurants and other firms on the island.

He said the government should allocate more funds for promotional campaigns to reach potential tourists from other countries.

"Big markets such as China remained untapped," he told the INQUIRER.

Chusuey owns the 85-room Boracay Regency Beach Resort, one of the high-end resorts on the island.

"Many first-time visitors here only knew about the place from their friends," said BFI president Lara Salaver.

Bruce Gillespie, a tourist from Colorado, said only a few Americans know about the island.

"That's unfortunate because I've been to 60 countries and Boracay has the most beautiful beach and atmosphere," he added.

The island-resort, considered the country's premier tourist destination, also faces competition from tourist destinations in Palawan, Cebu and Bohol, said Salaver.

Tourism regional director Edwin Trompeta, however, said the private sector should take the lead in the promotion campaigns because the government has limited resources.

He said that in Hong Kong and Singapore, the promotion campaigns are spearheaded by privately run tourism promotion boards.

Tourist arrivals have increased over the past six years mainly due to the significant increase in domestic tourists and Korean visitors.

Tourist arrivals reached 339,434 last year, 12.85 percent higher than 300,792 visitors in 2002.

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DOF recommends hike in transport income taxes

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance is pushing for legislation to increase the tax on the income of the operators of public land transportation, saying that the current base for tax rates is obsolete.

The move, aimed at increasing revenue collection from the sector, was expected to draw stiff opposition from bus, jeepney and taxi operators.

Under the Tax Code, public transport operators are levied a 3-percent tax on gross income.

The Tax Code, however, still uses 1970s fare levels as the base in computing their income.

The Tax Code sets the minimum quarterly gross income that operators must declare at P2,400 for jeepneys plying Metro Manila, P1,200 for jeepneys plying provincial areas, and P3,600 for taxis in Metro Manila.

It also sets the minimum quarterly gross income for operators of buses with a maximum capacity of 30 passengers at P3,600.

The minimum income for operators of buses with a capacity of over 30 passengers is set at P7,200.

These income levels were based on the minimum fare levels in the late 1970s of 30 centavos for jeepneys and 40 centavos for taxis.

The minimum jeepney fare now stands at P4, while minimum taxi fare is P25.

The DOF is studying by how much it will increase the minimum gross income requirements for PUV operators, but the previously proposed revenue regulation recommended that the amounts be raised by more than 10 times.

The following are the DOF's proposed minimum gross income levels: P32,400 for operators of jeepneys plying Metro Manila; P14,000 for operators of jeepneys plying provincial areas; P42,000 for operators of taxis plying Metro Manila and public buses with a maximum capacity of 30 passengers; P84,000 for operators of buses with a capacity of more than 30 passengers each and P28,000 for operators of taxis plying provincial areas.

DA scores Australia on banana decision

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE AGRICULTURE department has criticized the Australian government for backtracking on its decision to allow the export of Philippine bananas.

"A month after it said it would allow our export of Cavendish bananas, Biosecurity Australia reversed its earlier recommendation," said Agriculture Secretary Luis P. Lorenzo Jr. on Friday.

Lorenzo said this was "very disappointing."

Biosecurity Australia manager Mary Harwood last Wednesday said a statistical error was found in the Import Risk Analysis of Philippine bananas.

This meant that some quarantine measures detailed in the IRA would have to be reassessed and strengthened.

Harwood told Maria Araceli Albarece, Manila's agricultural attaché to Canberra, however, that the changes in the quarantine measures were "minor" and "insignificant."

"Harwood could not publicly announce what the changes are until after the IRA panel has made the final reassessment. With the way things are going at Biosecurity Australia, we are unsure of the full integrity of the process considering that such basic lapses could occur," Lorenzo said.

In a report sent to the DA central office, Albarece said BA had released a memorandum explaining what the error was and alerted all stakeholders that as a result of the error, the biosecurity agency would be issuing an addendum to the revised IRA in the coming weeks.

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DTI to focus on Sorsogon pili industry

SORSOGON CITY—The Department of Trade and Industry will focus on pili production to boost the province's food industry.

Senen Malaya, DTI Industry and Investment Division chief, said the agency would help pili processors in the areas of production development, upgrading, packaging and labeling of pili products to make them more competitive here and abroad.

Malaya estimated that some P25 million in sales from processed pili went to DTI-assisted processors in 2003.

"That's not even one-fourth of trading transactions in pili," Malaya said, as he revealed that there are still many traders and processors who have not registered with the DTI.

He said the 16 processors that registered in 2001 have grown to 38.

Pili (Canarium ovatum), technically a fruit according to Doreen Fernandez's book "Fruits of the Philippines," is considered the "high commodity champion" in Sorsogon and was identified by the Department of Agriculture (DA) as the "flagship commodity" for Bicol.

DA records showed that in 1987, pili production in the Bicol Region reached an estimated 4,585 tons or 78.5 percent of the national figure.

In 1992, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources reported that the Bicol Region supplied 82 percent of the national production volume, most of which came from Sorsogon, prompting the National Economic Development Authority to declare Sorsogon as the commodity champion for pili.

The DA has conducted a pili dispersal program since 1992, through the Sorsogon Provincial Pili Development Council.

Some independent processors have successfully sold pili to Japan and the United States, according to Malaya.

DTI focuses its help on those who register and gives them the opportunity to join trade fairs where they can meet more customers. *Emir Emano Gamis, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Taiwan official calls for cut in bureaucracy

DAVAO CITY—A ranking Taiwanese government executive urged city officials to cut red tape to encourage investors to put up businesses in the city.

Dr. Hsin-hsing Wu, chief of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (Teco), said during a recent visit that too much red tape drives away investors.

"(Businessmen) are chasing time. For the investor, time is money. How to enhance competitive capability over other regions depends on Davao City," he said.

Wu said that aside from cutting red tape, officials should also define a clearer incentive package for investors and make the city's offices more efficient.

"How many are tax free? Are there incentives on electricity? Or what are the other incentives?" Wu said.

Currently, the Davao City Incentives and Promotions Center (DCIPC) offers standard tax holidays on mayor's permit fee, business permits, building permits and real property taxes depending on the nature and size of the investment.

"It should also improve its competitive edge and the best areas (would be) agriculture, food processor and technology," Wu said.

He said Taiwanese investors are keen on helping the city government improve its food processing and agri-business sectors.

They are focusing on the processing of mango, banana and pineapples, which have high export potential.

To improve competitiveness, Wu said the city should also increase its pool of skilled manpower.

"You need education because talented people will result in increased competitiveness," he said. *Joel B. Escovilla, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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PLAZA

MANILA

NR LA SALLE TAFT
BnewTwnhse/3stry/3br/3tb/grge P4.490M 8903461 loc 34

MANDALUYONG

BNew P'hse unit 4BR w/ TB, 1 Maid's Rm, Spacious Living Area, 2 Outdoor Veranda, Overlooking Wackwack Golfcourse, Facing East, 2 Pkng Slots, Semi-Furnished. Located at # 8 Wack-Wack Condo, Wack-Wack Ave., Mand. Call: 0917-8400829 - look for Malou; 929-9509 - look for Bing (office hours only)

PASIG

280sqm Rm 1802 Antel Global Ctr 4 Sale 17M Neg. 8951566 8997974 Jimmy/Imee

ORTIGAS 1BR CALL 520-0075

QUEZON CITY

CUBAO 1.5M No Int. 9132224

SAN JUAN

GH SJ 3BR Condo 5.5M 4121825

LOT

★SUBIC 48has@200/m²
Direct Buyer Only 0920-9112910

LAS PINAS

RUSH Comm'l lot 429sqm Along BF Resort Ave. Very Near Seton Sch Tel 837-3489

RUSH Comm'l lot 429sqm Along BF Resort Ave. Very Near Seton Sch Tel 837-3489

MUNTINLUPA

Alabang Lot Call 520-0075

QUEZON CITY

ACROPOLIS corner LOT 500m² AM Sun 6337601-03

★AYALA HILLS★
ALSO AYALA HEIGHTS
MRS. GASTON 931-2938/48
AYALA LAND BROKER

RUSH WHITEPLAINS 525sqm P20T/sqm 6337601-03

OTHER PROVINCIAL

BACOLOD CITY PROPERTY 996SQM COR LOT BESIDE THE HIGHWAY 50 METERS FRM SAN MIGUEL BREWERY COMPLEXN 30 METERS FRM STA FE RESORT HIGH VOLUME OF H2O NEAR PNP PROVINCIAL COMML & LOPUES EAST MALL CEL # 0917-3008143 - JOE GOLEZ; 0917-3713251 GEMMA

DUPLEX 3STY 09209120549

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

CONDO/TWNHSE

CAVITE

PASIG

LOT

PROVINCIAL

★TAGAYTAY LOTS★
240m²-up 3,520/m² TERMS! No Interest, nr Taal Vista 6609372

BUSINESS SPACE

POLYCLINIC SPACE 4 Rent 50m² Sta Ana Mla above Mercury Drug 3T/mo. 0919-3512810

FARM/FISHPEN/ RAWLANDS

MANDALA
Residential Farm Lots nr QC overlooking MM good Investment high ROI pre selling price 727-6871 • 0916-2212781

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

HOUSE

MAKATI

Bful Magallanes 90T 8691937

Nr Ayala 2Br 2TB 890-8681

CONDO/TWNHSE

MAKATI

1-3 BR PACIFIC PLZ Fort Ayala Ritz others 7766802 8242933

•PACIFIC PLAZA•
Ayala Avenue, Makati 3bdrms 3bthrms 274sqm beautifully fully frnishd w/tel maids rm /bthrm 2 car grge tel. ofc 8175461 8100301-02 (Marichu) Cell Phone 09185477052 Res. 5 4 1 5 5 9 5

MANILA

NR. UP Mla/Robinson
F-FURN STUDIO w/ Tel & Cable P10T Tel 0917-9160226

MANDALUYONG

NR. SM Megamall
S-FURN STUDIO@P8T/mo
Tel 0917-9160226

PASAY

1 RM Condo Central Park Pasay Tel. # 5252751/ 5249540 Res 0212943

PASIG

280sqm Rm 1802 Antel Global Center 4 Rent 280/sqm Neg. 8951566 8997974 Jimmy/Imee

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

CONDO/TWNHSE

SAN JUAN

Nr Unimart GHills 3BRS P22K/mo 671-4421•727-4840

APARTMENT

MAKATI

Up&Dwn 2BR Strng H2O Nr Buendia TL • 747-0101

MANDALUYONG

Wack² 3BR 2TB
14TH/F w/ View P40T/mo neg 566-5092 Cell 0916-5653628

PARANAQUE

7164216 8201453 PM SUCAT

PASAY

2BRM U/D P7500 T510-0915

QUEZON CITY

CUBAO P3.8 Std new 9124428

FOR LEASE

1. OFFICE SPACES
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DEFECT TV/COMPO 7325865

BUSINESS RENTAL

MAKATI nr BUENDIA
PTamo 62/148/185m² 1st class 8903461 loc 34 or 19 ofc hrs

LOAN & MORTGAGE

2% W/O TAKING CAR 3677523/24

LOT FOR LEASE

LOT for lease 8942836 / 0920-9216573 Mars

OFFICE SPACE FOR RENT

Prestige Twr 97m² 4121825 Jolibee Plz 110 130 150sqm

MAKATI

OFFICE SPACES FOR LEASE (44m² up to 627m²) 887-6003

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CARS

HONDA

•97 Civic Vtec 295T neg M+T 1st own orig paint 8060368•

HYUNDAI

STAREX 1999 P550T 9seater White Diesel 1st Owned 8437633•8437637•8437539 0917-8468227 Carol or Luz

Starex '99 Autotrans 380K Office 635-9471 / 75 Wkends 0917-4546747 Ruel

KIA

CARNIVAL 2000 DORY 8420131

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TRANSPORTATION FOR RENT

CARS FOR RENT

1T/Hiace 9136710/4333682

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PUBLIC AUCTION

MARCH 31, 2004 • WEDNESDAY • 2:00 p.m.
FUNCTION ROOM B • LA MAJA RICA HOTEL
McARTHUR HIGHWAY • TARLAC CITY

MONCADA

Lot 1 - LOT ONLY
LA 314sqm
LOT 1899-A, ALONG MCARTHUR HIGHWAY, BRGY LAPSING
Min. Bid Price PhP120,000.00

Lot 2 - LOT ONLY
LA 1,727sqm
LOTS 1904-A & 1904-B, BRGY. LAPSING
Min. Bid Price PhP220,000.00

Lot 3 - LOT ONLY
LA 5,297sqm
LOT 2141-E, ALONG McARTHUR HIWAY, BRGY MABINI
Min. Bid Price PhP557,000.00

Lot 4 - LOT ONLY
LA 456sqm
LOT 917-B, LUNA ST., PUROK 3, CAMPOSANTO 1, POBLACION
Min. Bid Price PhP155,000.00

PANIQUI

Lot 5 - LOT ONLY
LA 224sqm
LOT 3407-A-7-A, INTERIOR LOT, BRGY. CORAL
Min. Bid Price PhP34,000.00

Lot 6 - LOT ONLY
LA 300sqm
LOT 3407-B-2-G-2, INTERIOR LOT, BRGY. CORAL
Min. Bid Price PhP45,000.00

Lot 7 - LOT ONLY
LA 245sqm
LOT 3404-B-1-B-3, BRGY CORAL
Min. Bid Price PhP84,000.00

Lot 8 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 165sqm FA 61sqm
LOT 3283-C-2, #235 INTERIOR, BRGY. CORAL
Min. Bid Price PhP170,000.00

Lot 9 - LOT ONLY
LA 639sqm
LOT 4413-C, BRGY. MATALAPITAP
Min. Bid Price PhP118,000.00

Lot 10 - LOT ONLY
LA 251sqm
LOT 4876-C-6, BRGY. MATALAPITAP
Min. Bid Price PhP54,000.00

Lot 11 - LOT ONLY
LA 251sqm
LOT 4876-C-5, BRGY MATALAPITAP
Min. Bid Price PhP54,000.00

Lot 12 - LOT ONLY
LA 212sqm
LOT 4474-J, #12, BRGY. CANAN
Min. Bid Price PhP64,000.00

Lot 13 - LOT ONLY
LA 492sqm
LOT P-2, PATALAN
Min. Bid Price PhP84,000.00

Lot 14 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 492sqm FA 68sqm
LOT P-3, PATALAN
Min. Bid Price PhP95,000.00

Lot 15 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 200sqm FA 110sqm
LOT 4153-F-4, #1040 INTERIOR BURGOS ST
Min. Bid Price PhP128,000.00

Lot 16 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 2,485sqm FA 111sqm
LOT 2439-B BRGY COLIBANGBANG
Min. Bid Price PhP165,000.00

Lot 17 - LOT ONLY
LA 6,492sqm
LOT 3219, BRGY NIPACO
Min. Bid Price PhP347,000.00

Lot 18 - LOT ONLY
LA 722sqm
LOT 4120-D M. H. DEL PILAR ST (MCARTHUR HIWAY), BRGY ESTACION
Min. Bid Price PhP430,000.00

Lot 19 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 334sqm FA 102sqm
NO. 433 LACAYANGA SUBD., BRGY CAYANGA
Min. Bid Price PhP710,000.00

GERONA

Lot 20 - LOT ONLY
LA 500sqm
LOT 4826-B-2-C-3, CALAYAAN
Min. Bid Price PhP48,000.00

Lot 21 - LOT ONLY
LA 500sqm
LOT 4826-B-2-C-4 BRGY CALAYAAN
Min. Bid Price PhP48,000.00

Lot 22 - LOT ONLY
LA 400sqm
LOT 4-C-9-A-8, BRGY. PARSOLINGAN
Min. Bid Price PhP102,000.00

Lot 23 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 940sqm FA 90sqm
LOT 4489-C, PUROK TALNA, BRGY. TAGUMBAO
Min. Bid Price PhP133,000.00

Lot 24 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 219sqm FA 73sqm
LOT 2512-C-3-G, #53 CALLE MABINI (INTERIOR) POBLACION 1
Min. Bid Price PhP266,000.00

Lot 25 - LOT ONLY
LA 6,218sqm
LOT 1090-J, BARANGAY SINGAT
Min. Bid Price PhP317,000.00

Lot 26 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 17,010sqm FA (various)
LOTS 298-A-2 & 309 OLD PROV'L RD BRGY LUNA
Min. Bid Price PhP2,849,000.00

RAMOS

Lot 27 - LOT ONLY
LA 349sqm
LOT 3-D, POBLACION NORTE
Min. Bid Price PhP22,000.00

Lot 28 - LOT ONLY
LA 624sqm
LOT 3-C-2, POBLACION NORTE
Min. Bid Price PhP40,000.00

Lot 29 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 3,067sqm FA 33sqm
LOT 379 A-1, MUNICIPAL ROAD, POB. NORTE
Min. Bid Price PhP737,000.00

PURA

Lot 30 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 357sqm FA 58sqm
LOT 915-A, POBLACION 1
Min. Bid Price PhP164,000.00

VICTORIA

Lot 31 - LOT ONLY
LA 1,166sqm
LOT 1474, COR. IPIL IPIL & BRGY. ROAD, CALIBUNGAN
Min. Bid Price PhP100,000.00

Lot 32 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 141sqm FA 88sqm
LOT 2402-A-5, SAN AMBROSIO ST., SAN GAVINO
Min. Bid Price PhP122,000.00

Lot 33 - LOT ONLY
LA 2,000sqm
LOTS 1 & 2, RAIZ ST., SAN FERNANDO
Min. Bid Price PhP1,289,000.00

Lot 34 - LOT ONLY
LA 16,007sqm
LOT 215, SAN FRANCISCO
Min. Bid Price PhP1,896,000.00

Lot 35 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 20,617sqm FA 4698sqm
LOTS 681-A, 681-B, 681-C & 681-D, ALONG VICTORIA-PURA PROVINCIAL ROAD, BRGY. BANGAR
Min. Bid Price PhP2,988,000.00

LAPAZ

Lot 36 - LOT ONLY
LA 585sqm
LOT 3 BLK 1, SNR. DE LA PAZ SUBD., SAN ISIDRO
Min. Bid Price PhP100,000.00

Lot 37 - LOT ONLY
LA 658sqm
LOT 2 BLK 3, SNR. DE LA PAZ SUBD., SAN ISIDRO
Min. Bid Price PhP112,000.00

Lot 38 - LOT ONLY
LA 652sqm
LOT 1 BLK 3, SNR. DE LA PAZ SUBD., SAN ISIDRO
Min. Bid Price PhP139,000.00

Lot 39 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 800sqm FA 78sqm
LOT 3 BLK 16, #447 SONZA AVE., BRGY. COMILLAS
Min. Bid Price PhP150,000.00

Lot 40 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 763sqm FA 202sqm
LOT 9 BLK 24, SONZA ST., COMILLAS
Min. Bid Price PhP187,000.00

Lot 41 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 800sqm FA 146sqm
LOT 7 BLK 10, SONZA AVE., BRGY. COMILLAS
Min. Bid Price PhP390,000.00

Lot 42 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 1,196sqm FA 48sqm
LOT 9 BLK 23, SONZA ST., BRGY. COMILLAS
Min. Bid Price PhP476,000.00

Lot 43 - LOT ONLY
LA 2,389sqm
LOT 2067, BRGY MATAYUMTAYUM
Min. Bid Price PhP163,000.00

Lot 44 - LOT ONLY
LA 3,228sqm
LOT 2068, BRGY MATAYUMTAYUM
Min. Bid Price PhP220,000.00

Lot 45 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 789sqm FA 115sqm
LOT 2301-A, BRGY MATAYUMTAYUM
Min. Bid Price PhP314,000.00

CONCEPCION

Lot 46 - LOT ONLY
LA 3,293sqm
LOT 1 BLK 6, PINEDA ORCHARD, BRGY STO NINO
Min. Bid Price PhP173,000.00

Lot 47 - LOT ONLY
LA 1,148sqm
LOT 128-A-6, PINEDA ORCHARD, BRGY STO NINO
Min. Bid Price PhP586,000.00

Lot 48 - LOT ONLY
LA 1,670sqm
LOT 1 BLK 1, PINEDA ORCHARD, BRGY STO NINO
Min. Bid Price PhP752,000.00

Lot 49 - LOT ONLY
LA 1,982sqm
LOT 3 BLK 3, PINEDA ORCHARD, BRGY STO NINO
Min. Bid Price PhP892,000.00

Lot 50 - LOT ONLY
LA 16,475sqm
LOT 128-A-7, PINEDA ORCHARD, BRGY STO NINO
Min. Bid Price PhP943,000.00

Lot 51 - LOT ONLY
LA 2,385sqm
LOT 4 BLK 3, PINEDA ORCHARD, BRGY STO NINO
Min. Bid Price PhP1,074,000.00

Lot 52 - LOT ONLY
LA 2,439sqm
LOT 2 BLK 1, PINEDA ORCHARD, BRGY STO NINO
Min. Bid Price PhP1,098,000.00

Lot 53 - LOT ONLY
LA 2,496sqm
LOT 3 BLK 1, PINEDA ORCHARD, BRGY STO NINO
Min. Bid Price PhP1,123,000.00

CAPAS

Lot 54 - LOT ONLY
LA 2,306sqm
LOT 3-C-3, MANIPON CMPD., STO DOMINGO CAPAS
Min. Bid Price PhP399,000.00

SAN JOSE

Lot 55- LOT ONLY
LA 1,606sqm
LOT 19-A, BRGY. LAWACAMULAG
Min. Bid Price PhP188,000.00

Lot 56- LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 1,004sqm FA 75sqm
LOT 6035-A, BRGY. VILLA AGLIPAY
Min. Bid Price PhP258,000.00

TARLAC CITY

Lot 57 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 210sqm
LOT 4019-A-1, INTERIOR ESPINOSA ST., BRGY. SAPANG MARAGUL
Min. Bid Price PhP84,000.00

Lot 58 - LOT ONLY
LA 535sqm
LOT 52, SITIO KUMINTANG, SAPANG MARAGUL
Min. Bid Price PhP137,000.00

Lot 59 - LOT ONLY
LA 540sqm
LOT 53, SITIO KUMINTANG, SAPANG MARAGUL
Min. Bid Price PhP138,000.00

Lot 60 - LOT ONLY
LA 550sqm
LOT 54, SITIO KUMINTANG, SAPANG MARAGUL
Min. Bid Price PhP141,000.00

Lot 61 - LOT ONLY
LA 367sqm
L12, BLK 5, BRGY. AGUSO, STA CRUZ
Min. Bid Price PhP63,000.00

Lot 62 - LOT ONLY
LA 367sqm
L14, BLK 5, BRGY. AGUSO, STA CRUZ
Min. Bid Price PhP63,000.00

Lot 63 - LOT ONLY
LA 202sqm
LOT 10 BLK 18, OUR LADY OF RANSOM SUBD., MATATALAIB
Min. Bid Price PhP69,000.00

Lot 64 - LOT ONLY
LA 203sqm
LOT 16 BLK 18, OUR LADY OF RANSOM SUBD., MATATALAIB
Min. Bid Price PhP69,000.00

Lot 65 - LOT ONLY
LA 206sqm
LOT 8 BLK 18, OUR LADY OF RANSOM SUBD., MATATALAIB
Min. Bid Price PhP70,000.00

Lot 66 - LOT ONLY
LA 204sqm
LOT 9 BLK 18, OUR LADY OF RANSOM SUBD., MATATALAIB
Min. Bid Price PhP70,000.00

Lot 67 - LOT ONLY
LA 205sqm
LOT 17 BLK 18, OUR LADY OF RANSOM SUBD., MATATALAIB
Min. Bid Price PhP70,000.00

Lot 68 - LOT ONLY
LA 207sqm
LOT 11 BLK 18, OUR LADY OF RANSOM SUBD., MATATALAIB
Min. Bid Price PhP71,000.00

Lot 69 - LOT ONLY
LA 208sqm
LOT 15 BLK 18, OUR LADY OF RANSOM SUBD., MATATALAIB
Min. Bid Price PhP71,000.00

Lot 70 - LOT ONLY
LA 207sqm
LOT 18 BLK 18, OUR LADY OF RANSOM SUBD., MATATALAIB
Min. Bid Price PhP71,000.00

Lot 71 - LOT ONLY
LA 208sqm
LOT 19 BLK 18, OUR LADY OF RANSOM SUBD., MATATALAIB
Min. Bid Price PhP71,000.00

Lot 72 - LOT ONLY
LA 237sqm
LOT 13 BLK 18, OUR LADY OF RANSOM SUBD., MATATALAIB
Min. Bid Price PhP81,000.00

Lot 73 - LOT ONLY
LA 228sqm
LOT 14 BLK 18, OUR LADY OF RANSOM SUBD., MATATALAIB
Min. Bid Price PhP88,000.00

Lot 74 - LOT ONLY
LA 231sqm
LOT 12 BLK 18, OUR LADY OF RANSOM SUBD., MATATALAIB
Min. Bid Price PhP89,000.00

Lot 75 - LOT ONLY
LA 768sqm
LOT 12 BLK 4, SALVADOR SUBD., SITIO MALIGAYA, BRGY AGUSO
Min. Bid Price PhP131,000.00

Lot 76 - LOT ONLY
LA 789sqm
LOT 13 BLK 4, SALVADOR SUBD., SITIO MALIGAYA, BRGY AGUSO
Min. Bid Price PhP135,000.00

Lot 77 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 1,000sqm FA 63sqm
LOT 5-A-A, BRGY STO NIÑO, TARLAC
Min. Bid Price PhP181,000.00

Lot 78 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 1,220sqm
LOT 4808, SAN JUAN DE MATA
Min. Bid Price PhP124,000.00

Lot 79 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 565sqm FA 74sqm
LOT 4792-B-1, BRGY SAN JUAN DE MATA
Min. Bid Price PhP157,000.00

Lot 80 - LOT ONLY
LA 1,014sqm
LOT 5, BRGY SAN JUAN DE MATA
Min. Bid Price PhP191,000.00

Lot 81 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 515sqm FA 66sqm
LOT 4831-C, PUROK HAPPY VALLEY, SAN JUAN DE MATA
Min. Bid Price PhP200,000.00

Lot 82 - LOT ONLY
LA 2,703sqm
LOTS 1, 2, 3, 4 & 4790-B, BRGY. SAN JUAN DE MATA
Min. Bid Price PhP290,000.00

Lot 83 - LOT ONLY
LA 13,633sqm
LOT 5, BRGY STA CRUZ
Min. Bid Price PhP409,000.00

Lot 84 - LOT ONLY
LA 344sqm
LOT 43, MACARTHUR HIWAY, STA. CRUZ
Min. Bid Price PhP205,000.00

Lot 85 - LOT ONLY
LA 240sqm
LOT 43-B, SAN VICENTE HILLS SUBD., SAN VICENTE
Min. Bid Price PhP252,000.00

Lot 86 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 188sqm FA 88sqm
LOT 18 BLK 3, CADENA DE AMOR ST., CAPITOL SUBD., SAN VICENTE
Min. Bid Price PhP350,000.00

Lot 87 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 240sqm FA 150sqm
LOT 1 BLK 8, FAIRLANE SUBD., SAN VICENTE
Min. Bid Price PhP452,000.00

Lot 88 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 622sqm FA 70sqm
LOTS 43-C & 43-D, SAN VICENTE HILLS SUBD., SAN VICENTE
Min. Bid Price PhP515,000.00

Lot 89 - LOT ONLY
LA 851sqm
LOTS 7, 8, 9, 10, & 11, BLOCK 1, BRGY SAN VICENTE
Min. Bid Price PhP798,000.00

Lot 90 - LOT ONLY
LA 1,025sqm
LOT 108-A, SITIO KUMINTANG, SAPANG MARAGUL
Min. Bid Price PhP282,000.00

Lot 91 - LOT ONLY
LA 6,918sqm
LOT 9370-A, PUROK 6, SAPANG MARAGUL
Min. Bid Price PhP370,000.00

Lot 92 - LOT ONLY
LA 1,426sqm
LOT 4033, PARAISO COR MEDINA STS., SAPANG MARAGUL
Min. Bid Price PhP375,000.00

Lot 93 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 606sqm FA 165sqm
LOTS 3992-B & 3992-C, BRGY SAPANG MARAGUL
Min. Bid Price PhP804,000.00

Lot 94 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 240sqm FA 38sqm
LOT 7 BLK 11, BACUIT, SAPANG MARAGUL, TARLAC
Min. Bid Price PhP47,000.00

Lot 95 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 1,306sqm FA 108sqm
LOT 3135-C, # 204 & 205, BRGY ALVINDIA
Min. Bid Price PhP416,000.00

Lot 96 - LOT ONLY
LA 302sqm
LOT 23 BLK 1, WALING WALING ST., LAZATIN SUBDIVISION, SAN ROQUE
Min. Bid Price PhP431,000.00

Lot 97 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 538sqm FA 180sqm
LOT 13 BLK 6, 424 3RD STREET, PARADISE SUBD., SAN ROQUE
Min. Bid Price PhP1,617,000.00

Lot 98 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 978sqm FA 25sqm
LOT 9 BLK 2, ALONG ROMULO HIWAY

STA. IGNACIA

Min. Bid Price PhP452,000.00

Lot 99 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 4,685sqm FA (various)
LOTS 1-A-2, 1-A-3, 1-A-4, 1-A-3-B & 1068-A, ROMULO HIWAY, POB EAST

STA. IGNACIA

Min. Bid Price PhP3,522,000.00

Lot 100 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 270sqm FA 94sqm
LOT 11 BLK 9, STO. DOMINGO II CAPAS
Min. Bid Price PhP492,000.00

Lot 101 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 224sqm FA 144sqm
LOT A, BLK 1, BRGY. SAN MANUEL
Min. Bid Price PhP503,000.00

Lot 102 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 240sqm FA 56sqm
LOT 7 BLK 53, SAN SEBASTIAN VILLAGE PHASE III, BINAUGANAN
Min. Bid Price PhP605,000.00

Lot 103 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 4,176sqm FA 140sqm
LOT 2-B-3, SITIO MOLAVE, BRGY SAN ISIDRO
Min. Bid Price PhP863,000.00

Lot 104 - LOT ONLY
LA 194sqm
LOT 484, #822 F. TANEDO ST., SAN NICOLAS
Min. Bid Price PhP2,959,000.00

Lot 105 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 1,591sqm FA 32sqm
LOT 2, MAC ARTHUR HIWAY, SAN RAFAEL
Min. Bid Price PhP7,196,000.00

Lot 106 - LOT ONLY
LA 2,732sqm
LOT 2-F-1-E, HAPPY HILLS SUBD., CARANGIAN
Min. Bid Price PhP1,025,000.00

Lot 107 - LOT & IMPRVMNT
LA 345sqm FA 214sqm
LOT 1, #0570 - 439, PROVINCIAL ROAD, ARANGUREN
Min. Bid Price PhP1,176,000.00

Lot 108 - LOT ONLY
LA 5,860sqm
LOTS 2576-B-2-A, C & B, MCARTHUR HIGHWAY, SEPUNG CALSADA
Min. Bid Price PhP5,922,000.00

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2% w/o Taking Car 7262780

2% w/oTaking Car 7221021

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2% w/oTaking Car 8966630/33

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CELL: NOLI 0920-9079510

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More Classifieds on A10

NATIONAL CLASSIFIEDS

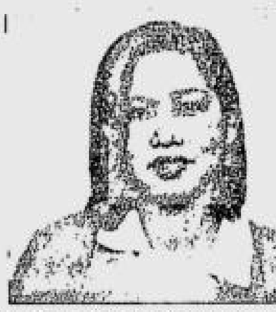
The Board of Directors of
OMS PHILS. CORPORATION
give notice that
MR. JOSELITO F. ABIERA
was not elected as a member of its
Board of Directors
The new additional elected member is
MR. TEODORICO F. PEDROSA, JR.
effective March 9, 2004

NOTICE OF CLOSURE

Notice is hereby given that the Representative Office of **JOHNSON CONTROLS HONG KONG, LTD.** in the Philippines has closed and ceased operations effective **31 December 2002.**

(PDI - March 22, 29 & April 5, 2004)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC



The public is hereby notified that **PATRICIA (PATTY) RENA OLASO**, whose last known address is #15 Ilo-Ilo Street, Bago Bantay, Quezon City and whose picture appears herein is no longer connected with Starapple Computer Corporation. Any transaction made by her on behalf of the company shall not be honored. She is the accused in Criminal Case No. 03-1018 for **Qualified Theft** pending before Branch 206 of Regional Trial Court of Muntinlupa City.

The Trial Court has issued a warrant for the arrest of Patricia Rena Olaso. Anyone who has information on the whereabouts of Patricia Rena Olaso may contact:

FRANCISCO PAREDES & MORALES LAW OFFICE
Suite 2101 OMM-CITRA Bldg.
San Miguel Ave. Ortigas Center, Pasig City
Tel. Nos.: 6346597 / 6830934
Atty. Eduardo E. Francisco

(PDI - March 22, 2004)

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC-EDC
Energy Center, Merrit Road
Fort Bonifacio, 1634 Taguig,
Metro Manila, Philippines
Tel (632) 893-6001
Fax (632) 840-1575

PNOC - Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project.

TWO (2) YEARS CONTRACT FOR PHOTOCOPYING SERVICES
EDC04-029

The Approved Budget is P3,016,280.00 chargeable against PNOC-EDC fund. The contract duration is 2 years.

Application Forms for Eligibility and Bid Documents may be secured from the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group (c/o E. G. Murillo) starting **March 22, 2004** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Pesos: Two Hundred (P200.00).

For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on **April 1, 2004**, 10:00 a.m. at the CAC Conference Room Bldg. 5 at the above address. Site inspection will follow thereafter.

Contractor, not yet included in the PNOC-EDC's List of Registered Contractors, who wishes to participate in the public bidding, in order to facilitate eligibility check/screening is requested to register with the said registration office by submitting the following basic requirements which should be maintained current and updated every year. 1) DTI Business Name Registration and/or Certified true copy of valid SEC Registration Certificate, as appropriate, 2) Current Mayor's Permit/Municipal License, 3) Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN); 4) Value Added Tax (VAT) Certification of Registration, 5) Notarized statement that contractor/firm is not "blacklisted" or barred from bidding by any government agency, office or corporation, including non-inclusion in the "blacklist" of contractors issued by CIAP, 6) Audited Financial Statement, stamped "received" by the BIR or its duly accredited and authorized institutions for the immediately preceding calendar year, showing amon gothers, its total and current assets and liabilities inclusive of Income Tax Return and Receipt, and 7) Contractor's License, where applicable. A Certificate of Submission shall be issued to contractors upon approval.

Applications for Eligibility and sealed bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group at the above address not later than 2:00 p.m. **of April 20, 2004** and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC.

(PDI - March 22, 2004)

BAC CHAIRMAN

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & COMMUNICATIONS

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO RE-BID

The Department of Transportation and Communications, Philippine Coast Guard – Project Management Office (DOTC/PCG-PMO) through the DOTC – PBAC is inviting General Contractors with License Classification of "General Engineering" and IAC Registration of Small B for "Ports, Harbors & Offshore Engineering" for the re-bidding of the Lighthouse Project located at Cabuli Island, El Nido, Palawan.

The scope of work covers civil works, tower erection, electrical installation and other miscellaneous works. The Approved Budget Cost (ABC) for the said lighthouse is P1,206,991.70 and the contract duration shall not be more than one hundred twenty (120) calendar days.

All interested bidders should present the original copies of the following documents on 23 March or before 05 April 2004 at the PCG-PMO, 2nd Floor, S&L Building, Roxas Blvd. corner R. Salas St., Ermita, Manila, to wit:

a. DTI or SEC Registration
b. Mayor's Permit/Municipal License
c. Contractor's License (Certified True Copy)
d. Taxpayer's Identification Number
e. CIAP Certificate that the Contractor is not "Blacklisted"

The following schedule should be strictly observed:

• Issuance of Eligibility Documents	– 23 March – 05 April 2004
• Submission of accomplished Eligibility Statements	– 12 April 2004
• Issuance of Bid Documents, Plans & Drawings	– 20 April 2004
• Pre-Bid Conference	– 21 April 2004
• Submission and Opening of Bids	– 03 May 2004
• Funding Source	– SARO No. A-03-06866 dated 29 December 2003

The Bid Documents, Plans and Drawings will only be issued to registered and eligible bidders upon the payment of a non-refundable fee of Five Hundred Pesos (Php500.00) at the Cashier's Office of the DOTC, 5th Floor, Columbia Tower, Ortigas Avenue, Mandaluyong City.

Bidders who have initially responded to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid and were declared eligible in the first bidding shall be allowed to submit new bids without necessarily procuring the bid documents earlier obtained.

The DOTC reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, to waive any formality or technicality, and to award to any bidder whose proposal is deemed most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) **AGUSTIN R. BENGZON**
Undersecretary and Chairman, DOTC PBAC
for Maritime/Water Sector Projects

(PDI–March 19, 22 & 24, 2004)

MACTAN CEBU
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY
LAPU-LAPU CITY PHILIPPINES

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The Mactan-Cebu International Airport Authority through its Bids and Award Committee (BAC) with office at Mactan, Lapulapu City, invites all interested bidders to register and to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Supply and Installation, including Test and Commissioning of One (1) 5/6.25 MVA, 69 KV Power Substation for the Mactan-Cebu International Airport, ABC in the amount of Twenty Two million Three hundred Four thousand Nine hundred Eight Pesos point Ninety Five Centavos (PHP 22,304,908.95).
2. Interested Bidders who may apply for eligibility should be:
   a. Filipino Citizen with DTI Registered Business Name or SEC Registration Certificate whichever may be appropriate under the existing laws of the Philippines, with at least sixty (60%) percent of the outstanding capital stock belongs to citizens of the Philippines.
   b. Has valid PCAB License, Specialty Electrical Contractor at Category Medium B Minimum
   c. Capable of a Turn Key Basis Project (meaning the contract amount is payable in full Fifteen Days (15) after the date of completion, acceptance of the project. No mobilization Fee).
3. To be registered, interested bidders must submit the following eligibility documents (in case of photocopied documents, the original must be presented):
   a. DTI/SEC Registration Certificate, Joint Venture Agreement whichever appropriate under the law
   b. Mayor's Permit, Municipal License
   c. Taxpayer's Identification Number
   d. Statement of Prospective bidders that it is not "blacklisted" or barred from bidding by any government agency, office or corporation, including non-inclusion in the "blacklist" of contractors issued by the Construction Industry Authority of the Philippines (CIAP)
   e. Valid PCAB License, Specialty Electrical Contractor at Category Medium B minimum.
   f. Notarized affidavit certifying under oath that each documents submitted is an original copy or a true faithful reproduction or copy of the original
   g. Contractor's record of experienced for the past 3 years, as *Main Contractor* of a 69 KV Power substation project - (Submit list of project w/ corresponding contract and Certification of Turn-over and Acceptance).
   h. Audited Financial Statement for the last 2 calendar years stamped received by BIR
4. Submission of Letter of Intent with Eligibility documents in Two (2) copies will be on March 22 to 31, 2004. Distribution of Bid Documents will be on April 12 to April 19, 2004 at the BAC's Office from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. Monday to Friday upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P11,000.00
   Pre-Bid Conference : April 24, 2004 at 9:00 A.M. at BAC Office
   Bid Opening : May 18, 2004 at 10:00 A.M. at BAC Office
5. The BAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids waive any defect of informality, assume no obligations whatsoever or indemnity to the bidders any expense of loss that it may incur in the preparation of its bid, and to accept the bid most advantageous to the Government. The R.A. 9184 and its implementing rules and regulations shall apply to this bidding process.
6. For more information, please contact the BAC Secretariat at telephone number 3402486 local 1461 or 2050.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. ROGELIO C. YAUN**
BAC Chairman

(PDI--March 22 & 29, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
Center for Health Development II
SOUTHERN ISABELA GENERAL HOSPITAL
Barangay Rosario, Zamora Street, Santiago City, Isabela
Telephone # (078) 682-8123 Fax # (078) 682-7687

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **SOUTHERN ISABELA GENERAL HOSPITAL**, Santiago City hereby invites interested suppliers to provide Drugs and Medicines, Laboratory, X-ray, Medical, Office and Janitorial Supplies to this office.

Only duly accredited manufacturers/suppliers as certified by the DOH may participate in the bidding. Bid documents can be secured from the SIGH HOBAC secretariat, Administrative Services Section upon payment of a non-refundable fee of PHP500.00.

ACTIVITY	DATE/VENUE
➢ Issuance of Bid Documents / Submission of Application for Eligibility/Certificate of Registration	**March 22-April 06, 2004** Monday-Friday
➢ Pre-Bid Conference	**March 26, 2004**/Conference Room 9:00am - 12:00nn
➢ Submission and Opening of Sealed Bids 1. Drugs and Medicines	**April 12, 2004**/Conference Room 9:00 am
2. Office Supplies	**April 12, 2004**/Conference Room 1:30 pm
3. Medical, X-Ray & Laboratory Supplies	**April 13, 2004**/Conference Room 9:00 am
➢ TWG-result should be submitted	**April 19-27, 2004**
➢ Post Qualification	**April 28-29, 2004**
➢ Notice of Award	**May 14, 2004**

The SOUTHERN ISABELA GENERAL HOSPITAL reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the proposal received, or to accept such bids as maybe responsive and advantageous to the government.

For details, contact NOVELINDA P. CALEJA - HOBAC Secretariat Head, SIGH.

(Sgd.) **JOSE ILDEFONSO B. COSTALES, JR, MD, MHA, FICS**
Chief of Hospital I

(PDI--March 17 & 22, 2004)

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LAPTOP COMPUTERS - **IBM** 600E Thinkpad; **TOSHIBA** Po rtege 660 CDT, Portege 650CT, Portege 610CT Tecra 720CDT, Tecra 720CDT, Tecra Satellite Pro; **NEC** Versa P/75, Versa; **ZENITH DATA SYSTEMS** Z-lite 320C, Znote 433LNC+ Laptop Computers; A Qty. Of Laptop Accessories, etc.
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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE
Bids and Awards Committee for Information Technology (BAC-IT)

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bureau of Internal Revenue is inviting interested firms to apply for eligibility and to bid for the **BIR Information Technology Outsourcing Initiative.** The procurement of and subsequent contracting for the I.T. services shall be in four (4) separate projects. The BIR wishes to bid out the first of the four projects, namely:

Name of Project	A - Project and Contract Management
Brief Description	Provide consulting, technical and management services necessary to assist the BIR in the implementation of the BIR IT Outsourcing Initiative, specifically including the monitoring and management of the service providers for projects B - Applications Development and Maintenance, C - Data Center Services and D - Data Entry Services.
Contract Duration	July 1 to December 31, 2004
Approved Budget	Php 22,000,000.00
Source of Funding	e-Government Fund.

Note that the winning bidder for Project and Contract Management will not be allowed to bid for the other three projects to be bidded out later.

Competitive bidding will be conducted in accordance with Republic Act No. 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act and its Implementing Rules and Regulations. The procurement shall follow the rules prescribed for Eligibility and Shortlisting of Consulting Services and Quality Based Evaluation Procedure.

Interested parties must submit their Letter of Intent to the undersigned on or before **April 12, 2004.** Those who have expressed their interest may secure the Eligibility Requirements Checklists and Forms from **March 22 to April 21, 2004** from the BAC - IT, Secretariat Rm. 302, 3/F Revenue Computer Center (RCC) Bldg., BIR Compound, BIR Road, Brgy. Piñahan, Diliman, Quezon City.

Deadline for submission of the eligibility requirements is on **April 22, 2004.**

Qualified local and foreign companies/outsourcers/consulting firms/service providers licensed to perform the I.T. services required by the BIR may participate in the Bidding if deemed eligible and are short-listed.

Pursuant to the IRR, only eligible and short-listed firms will be allowed to participate in the bidding process and obtain the Bidding Documents at the price of Php 4,400.00.

Pre-Bid Conference will be held on **May 12, 2004, Monday at 1:30 p.m.** to be held at the **Executive Conference Room, 3/F BIR-National Office Bldg., Brgy. Piñahan, Diliman, Quezon City.** The submission and opening of Bids will be on **May 24, 2004, Monday at 1:30 p.m.** to be held at the **Executive Conference Room, 3/F BIR-National Office Bldg.**

For particulars, please inquire from the BAC-IT Secretariat, thru the Chief, SSTMD-IPQS at Rm. 302, 3/F Revenue Computer Center (RCC) Bldg., BIR Compound, BIR Road, Brgy. Piñahan, Diliman, Quezon City or call telephone nos. 981-7085, 927-4104 (telefax), 981-7079 and 981-7088, or e-mail us at lilibeth.maranan@bir.gov.ph until **May 23, 2004.**

(Sgd.) **ATTY. LEONOR S. VILLALON-ROGERS**
Assistant Commissioner, HRDS
Chairman, BAC-IT

(PDI - March 22 & 29, 2004)

MACTAN CEBU
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY
LAPU-LAPU CITY PHILIPPINES

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The Mactan-Cebu International Airport Authority (MCIAA) through its Bids and Award Committee (BAC) with Office at Mactan, Lapulapu City, invites all interested Suppliers/ bidders to reigster and to apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply of one (1) unit 3,000 gals. Capacity, Major Foam Tender Aircraft Rescue Firefighting Truck, Unit cost of $630,000.00.
2. Interested Bidders who may apply for eligibility should be:
   a. A Filipino Citizen with DTI Registered Business Name or SEC Registration Certificate whichever may be appropriate under the existing laws of the Philippines, with at least sixty (60%) percent of the outstanding capital stock belongs to citizens of the Philippines or Direct Manufacturers interested to bid.
   b. A Direct Manufacturer must have a track record of similar transactions for at least 5 years and same for In-Country Distributors.
   c. A Direct Manufacturer must guarantee after sales service warranty and for the availability of bidded equipment's components & parts for at least 5 years
2. To be registered, interested bidders must submit the following eligibility documents (in case of photocopied documents, the original must be presented). For Direct Manufacturers, all documents must be authenticated by the Philippine Consulate Office in the country of origin.
   a. DTI/SEC Registration Certificate, or Similar Documents for the Direct Manufacturer's country of origin, whichever is appropriate
   b. Mayor's Permit, Municipal License
   c. BIR Certificate of Registration
   d. Notarized affidavit certifying under oath that each documents submitted is an original copy or a true faithful reproduction or copy of the original
   e. List of Completed Similar Transactions for at least 5 years for Supplier/Manufacturer Submit Certification of Acceptance and Turnover. List of on-going and to be awarded transactions.
   f. Audited Financial Statement for the last 2 years stamped by BIR or its duly accredited & authorized institution.
   g. Organizational Chart, List of Key Personnel with resumé
3. Submission of Letter of Intent with Eligibility Documents will be on March 23 to 29 2004. Distribution of Bid Documents will be on April 12 to 16, 2004 at the BAC's Office from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P18,000.00
   Pre-Bid Conference April 29, 2004 @ 9:00 A.M.
   Bid Opening May 27, 2004 @ 10:00 A.M. (closing 9:45 A.M.)
4. For more information, please contact the BAC Secretariat at telephone no. (032) 3402486 local 1461 or 2050/2051 or at telefax no. (032) 341-4617.
5. The BAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any defect or informality assume no obligations whatsoever of indemnity to the bidders any expense of loss that it may incur in the preparation of its bid, and to accept the bid most advantageous to thu Goverment.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. ROGELIO C. YAUN**
BAC Chairman

(PDI--March 15, & 22, 2004)

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In Loving Memory...

First Death Anniversary

Elizabeth Daoey Lomibao

(October 16, 1949 - March 22, 2003)

Holy Masses for her eternal peace will be offered at the following churches:

Cathedral of St. Mary & St. John *E. Rodriguez Blvd., Cathedral Heights, Q.C.*	9:00 AM March 21, 2004
Cathedral of the Resurrection *Magsaysay Avenue, Baguio City*	6:30 AM, 9:30 AM March 21, 2004
Holy Innocent's Episcopal Church *Easter Road, Baguio City*	6:30 AM, 9:00 AM March 21, 2004
St. Nicholas Church *Brent School Compound, Baguio City*	9:00 AM March 21, 2004
Cathedral of All Saints *Bontoc, Mt. Province*	6:00 AM March 23, 2004
Sta. Rita Parish Church *Bontoc, Mt. Province*	6:00 AM March 23, 2004
St. Thomas Aquinas Parish Church *Mangaldan, Pangasinan*	6:00 AM March 22, 2004
Pindangan Church *Pindangan Ruins, San Fernando City, La Union*	6:00 AM March 22, 2004
San Antonio de Padua Parish Church *Sugpon, Ilocos Sur*	8:00 AM March 22, 2004
Sto. Niño de Praga Parish Church *Cogeo, Antipolo City*	6:00 AM March 22, 2004

Her husband **Arturo**, children **Louanda & Chase**; brothers and sisters **Ellen, Francis, Prisca, Gilbert** and **Alfa**; brothers and sisters-in-law, nephews and nieces request relatives and friends and all those whose lives she has touched, to remember her in prayers.

"If I should ever leave you whom I love, To go along the silent way
Grieve not nor speak of me with tears,
But laugh and talk of me, as if I were beside you there..."
by Isla Paschal Richardson

---

*"He died as he lived.
Quietly."*
Anonymous

ENGR. ROMULO A. PETINES

February 13, 1912 - March 20, 2004
of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija

Rejoined his Mentor, the Big Builder in the Sky

He is survived by his children **Bob** and **Nora**, **Nenita** and **Roland**, **Dodo** and **Leny**, **Nel** and **Ching**, **Helen** and **Red**, **Ling** and **Sol**, **Arlyn**, **Nancy** and **Charlie**; grandchildren and great grandchildren.

His beloved spouse, **Inday** (†), and youngest son, **My** (†), are keenly awaiting his arrival to accompany him to his final destination in the bosom of the Lord.

This quiet, unassuming man of multifaceted talents had a great zeal for life, and lived it to the fullest. His humble origins, notwithstanding, he succeeded by dint of hard work, with his integrity intact. He was a civil engineer, WW2 guerilla leader, professional photographer, contractor and timber magnate, but he was first and foremost a builder.

Among the landmark structures that his firm, *R.A. Petines Inc.*, built are the *Quirino Grandstand*, the old *NPC Building* along Roxas Boulevard, and of course, *Guadalupe Bridge*, without which, countless commuters would not have been able to go to work through the years.

His mortal remains lie in state at the Petines family residence at 52 Times Street, Diliman, Quezon City. Interment is on Tuesday, March 23, at the Petines family mausoleum in Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City, following the 8:00 A.M. Mass at the family residence.

Most Rev. Sofio G. Balce, D.D., S.T.D., Bishop of Cabanatuan
Most Rev. Sofronio A. Bancud, D.D.,
Auxiliary Bishop of Cabanatuan
The Clergy, Religious Women and Laity
of the Diocese of Cabanatuan

With sadness and at the same time with belief
in the Resurrection communicate the demise of

REV. MSGR. LUCIANO YOSUICO GUECO, H.P.

on March 18, 2004 at the age of 79 in Angeles City.

His remains lie in state at the
Holy Mary Memorial Chapel, Angeles City.

Funeral Mass will be offered at the Chapel of the Resurrection
on Tuesday, March 23, 2004 at the Holy Mary Memorial Park,
Angeles City.

Interment will be at the Clergy Burial Ground.

Forever in our hearts...

QUE PEI LAN / BEN QUE

*Passed away in the Grace
of our Lord on March 20, 2004.*

He shall be missed by his dearest wife **Dottie**, children **Benjie & Rowena**, sister-in-law **Frisca**, relatives & friends, they request pious readers to pray for his eternal rest and everlasting happiness.

His remains lie in state at the Floresco Funeral Homes, 511 A. Mabini St., Kalookan City.

Interment will be after the 10:00 a.m. Mass on Tuesday, March 23, 2004 at the Eternal Gardens Memorial Park, Baesa, Quezon City.

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635-0219; 635-0220

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."
John 3:16

At 5:50 p.m. on March 20, 2004 (Saturday),
at the age of 72, our dear Sister

SR. PILAR M. DEFIÑO, FMA

finally surrendered her life to the Father after 44 years
of faithful and generous service in the Institute of the Daughters
of Mary Help of Christians.

Her remains lie in state at Don Bosco School Chapel,
3500 V. Mapa Ext. Sta. Mesa, Manila.

Schedule of Masses
Salesian Family Mass: March 22, 2004 - 8:00 p.m.
Funeral Mass: March 23 (Tuesday), 2004 - 1:30 p.m.
Don Bosco Chapel, Sta. Mesa, Manila

Interment at Manila Memorial Park,
Sucat, Parañaque City.

So Lovingly Remembered on the First Death Anniversary

Ambassador

AMADO P. CORTEZ

Who passed away on March 22, 2003

From his wife **GLORIA SEVILLA-CORTEZ**; children,
grandchildren, brothers, sisters, and relatives.

Holy Masses will be offered at the following churches:

Loyola Memorial Park Chapels, Marikina	March 22, 2004	7:00 AM
Holy Rosary Cathedral, Dipolog City	March 22, 2004	6:30 AM
Saint Patrick Church, San Francisco, California, USA	March 21, 2004	12:00 NN

Our heartfelt gratitude to those who offered Masses and prayers and who in countless ways helped and comforted us during our moments of bereavement over our beloved Amado.

Do not stand at my grave and weep.
I am not there, I do not sleep.
I am the million stars that glow.
I am the thousand winds that blow.
I am the gentle drops of rain.

I am the sunlight on ripened grain.
I am the quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft hush of restful night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry.
I am not there, I did not die.

JUAN S. CHIONGSON, JR.

Sept. 29, 1935 – March 19, 2004

His remains lie in state at del Pilar Chapel, La Funeraria Paz-Sucat (inside Manila Memorial Park), Parañaque City.

Interment will be on Thursday, 25th of March after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at Manila Memorial Park.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring...
INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate; ❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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Paving the way for affordable medicines

OUR COUNTRY is facing a massive healthcare crisis. Millions of Filipinos do not have access to medical treatment. While there are efforts to improve disease management in the country, the Philippines is way behind in making healthcare affordable for its citizens, especially those who are living below the poverty line. With the prevalence of chronic diseases rising in epidemic proportion, the Filipinos' inability to buy medicines that would manage their diseases seems to be a prescription for disaster.

Based on the 2002 Philippine Pharmacoeconomic survey on the prescription-buying behavior of 259 Filipino chronic disease patients, 65 percent do not comply with their prescribed medication because of financial constraints. With the economic crisis that beseeched our country, the number of patients who cannot afford to sustain their medication is predicted to increase.

As many people in developing countries do not have access to lifesaving quality medicines, serious moves should be done in order to ensure that people suffering from chronic disease or any disease for that matter could afford the medicine that would help them manage their illness. New and effective medicines, which have been developed for the management of chronic diseases, would be useless if they cannot be utilized by the people who need it.

In the Philippines, the principle of pharmacoeconomics has already been initiated. Pharmacoeconomics ensures administration of medicines, other healthcare products and services with the highest possible benefits to the patient in relation to the cash invested. It aims to improve patient compliance by providing effective and affordable medicines that have to be taken religiously for several years, sometimes for life, which is the case with people who suffer from chronic diseases.

Although cost containment is one of its primary goals, the benefits of pharmacoeconomics are not confined to the money being saved by a patient through a less expensive drug. The greatest benefit of pharmacoeconomics lies in the fact that these drugs are effective and bioequivalent with the originator drugs manufactured by multinational companies.

A good understanding of pharmacoeconomics may serve to guide disease management, inform clinical decisions and aid practical prescription of medicines. An affordable and effective drug, coupled with improved compliance, will result in better disease management and fewer repeat consultations and prescriptions. More importantly, it would pave the way for a patient's productivity and better quality of life.

With the prevalence of chronic disease increasing to epidemic proportion, choosing drugs that are therapeutic equivalents is of increasing importance. The various divisions of Unilab, a leading pharmaceutical company in the country, are committed to helping improve healthcare delivery to every Filipino family by providing high-quality and affordable medicines for common medical problems.

CALTEX INKS PACT WITH RRCG

Caltex Philippines recently signed an agreement with RRCG Transport for the latter's exclusive use of Caltex lubricants in its more than a hundred buses. In return, Caltex shall use RRCG buses as a moving advertising medium through ads strategically placed at the back of its units. Shown are Steven T. Mulvaney (3rd from left), general manager of Caltex lubricants business unit, together with Caltex north district manager Ramon de Ocampo (right) inking the contract with RRCG president Robert Torres Sr (2nd from left) and VP for finance Robert Torres Jr.

MORE REASONS TO FEEL SPECIAL THIS SEASON OF LOVE

True to its commitment made Feb. 12 of giving exclusive gifts to a select circle, Laguna Properties Holdings Inc (LPHI) recently handed-over a Cartier Tank Francaise to Virginia Carandang and her daughter, Rachelle. Awarding the gift is LPHI sales operations and international sales head Danny G. Puga and broker Tess de Jesus. Buyers of Santarosa Estates, St. Alexandra Estates and Hacienda Sta. Monica can still avail themselves of the privilege of being Cartier watch owners or Capitol Hills/Eagle Ridge Golf Club members until March 31. Call 814-7419 or 814-7663.

BOSCH POWER TOOLS FOR MAKATI 'DIYERS'

Homeowners and carpentry enthusiasts working in Makati or living in the country's business capital now have quicker access to the power and versatility of Bosch Power Tools at the newly opened Ace Hardware at posh Greenbelt I in Ayala Center, Makati. To mark the opening, Bosch conducted a three-day demo featuring commonly used Power Tools such as planers, drills, impact drills, jigsaws, circular saws, sanders, hammers and vacuum cleaners. The audience was taught simple, easy Do-It-Yourself tasks that they could do at home. Shown are Nerissa Diaz-Flores, Bosch PR and communications manager, Johnny Cobankiat, president of Ace Hardware Philippines (right), together with other Ace officers during the store opening.

FIGHT AGAINST DRUGS

Las Pinas Rep. Cynthia Villar addresses her constituents regarding the dangers of drug abuse during the Sagip Bukas Anti-Drug campaign forum in Las Pinas City recently.

Insomnia no longer a problem

INSOMNIA is no longer a problem. Better Herbs Inc, a fast-rising herbal food supplement manufacturer, introduced recently at the Bayview Park Hotel Manila the latest and natural solution for sleeping problems or insomnia Better Sleep.

Better Sleep is unlike the usual sleeping pill because it is made of 100-percent Leizenzi Mushroom extract. This rare variety of mushroom is different from the mushroom we are familiar with. For one, its habitat is found only in the nesting cavity of a species of termites living underground. Its tentacle-like branches extend up to the surface of the ground.

Because of modern methods in research, scientists have been able to probe into the composition of the Leizenzi Mushroom up to its smallest microelements and discover its health-giving benefits. According to studies, this mushroom has a natural sedative effect that inhibits the wake centers of the brain. It regulates the sleeping pattern by correcting the body clock. When used to induce sleep, a certain volume has to be accumulated in the body to increase the production of Gaba, the inhibitory transmitter of the brain that prevents the activity of the wake centers.

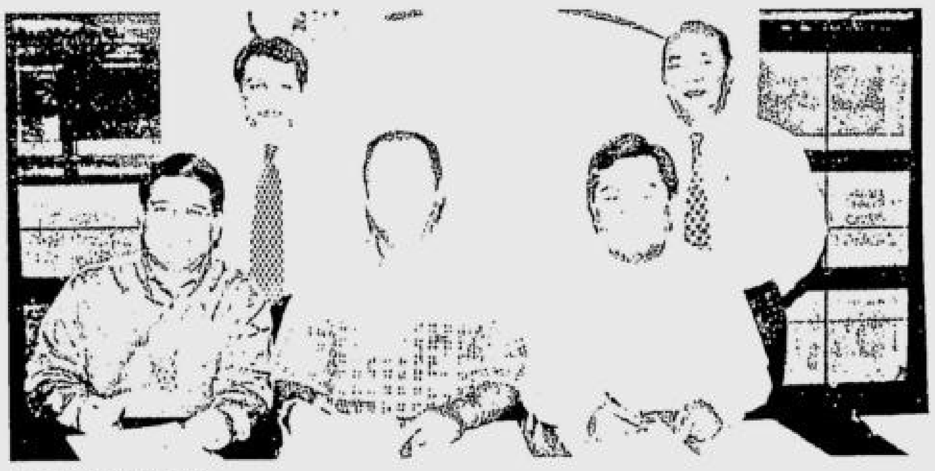
The extract of Leizenzi Mushroom can also regulate hormonal secretions, thereby correcting symptoms due to sex hormone imbalance such as prostate enlargement in men and menstrual disorder in women.

Better Sleep food supplement is non-narcotic, that is why it does not cause drowsiness. And because it is a long-term solution for insomnia, it is not addictive or habit forming. Better Sleep is approved by BFAD and is already available at all outlets of Emilene's Drug Store, Save More Drug, Manson Drug, Mercury Drug, and other leading drugstores near you.

Although food supplements can be taken without prescription, Better Herbs Inc strongly recommends a doctor's advice. For more information, call 721-4376, 723-4376 or text 0918-9349347.

SODEXHO PASS, 7-ELEVEN AGREEMENT

Sodexho Meal and Food Pass, the first service voucher used to manage employee meal and grocery benefits, is now also recognized at all 7-Eleven branches. 7-Eleven adds a wider selection within the network already accepting the Meal and Food Pass, including SM Supermarkets, selected SM Foodcourt outlets, and other restaurants. Participating in signing the agreement are (from left) Rebecca Arago, controller and Yeong Hsiang Yeh, president of Philippine Seven Corp, Frans Tiebout, president and Edwin Ventura, affiliation manager of Sodexho Pass Inc.



PBA ON RADIO

The Associated Broadcasting Company's (ABC) new management has formalized its partnership with Philippine Radio Corp, an established radio network operating 15 stations nationwide, to be the official radio carrier of the Philippine Basketball Association (PBA) 2004 Fiesta Conference by signing a memorandum of agreement recently. The tieup will expand the reach of the PBA and make the games more widely accessible. Present during the contract signing held in Makati City were (seated from left) ABC EVP and COO Reggie D. Galura, ABC president and CEO Antonio O. Cojuangco, Philippine Radio president and CEO Felicisimo B. Billones. Standing are Philippine Radio EVP and COO Francis L. Cardona and VP for operations Romeo A. Maximo.

Bits Clips

'The Passion' screening

THE PHILIPPINE Interisland Shipping Association (Pisa)-the umbrella organization of the domestic shipping sector-together with 20th Century Fox invites moviegoers to the advance screening of the "Passion of the Christ" on March 22, 7:15 p.m. at Onstage, Greenbelt 1, Makati City. Directed by Academy Award winner Mel Gibson, the film has been described by critics as "a powerful depiction of the last 12 hours of the life of Jesus Christ". Tickets to the screening are sold at the Pisa office at the ground floor, Standford Tower Condominium, 1870 MH del Pilar Street, Malate, Manila. For further inquiries, interested parties can get in touch with Tina or Liza at 524-5720 or 404-1260. Proceeds of the advance screening will go to the various projects and advocacy programs of the association.

2004 Tofil search launch

THE SEARCH for the Outstanding Filipino (Tofil) for 2004 will be launched March 23 at Club Filipino, Greenhills, San Juan. Robert F. Kuan, 2003 Tofil Awardee for business and entrepreneurship, will be the guest speaker. The launching ceremonies will be attended by the leaders of the Philippine Jaycee Senate and Insular Life, as well as past Tofil awardees and friends from industry and civic associations. Members of the 2004 Tofil committee headed by Ted D. Manacsa will also be inducted into office to signal the beginning of the Committee's search for outstanding Filipinos.

Now on its 17th year, the Tofil annual search is undertaken by the Philippine Jaycee Senate and Insular Life. Aside from Kuan, last year's awardees Sister Eva Fidela C. Maamo, president of the Foundation of Our Lady of Peace Mission Inc, for community service, and Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority Chair Felicito C. Payumo for government service.

Amhop marks 51st year

THE ASSOCIATION of Municipal Health Officers of the Philippines (Amhop), an association of physicians in the field of community medicines from various Municipal Health Offices, City Health Offices, Rural Health Units and Municipal Offices, will be undertaking its 51st Annual Convention. This year's theme, "Bagong Sigla '04-Kaabag sa mga Pagsulay (ally in challenging times)" reflects Amhop's quest to put health in the hands of every Filipino people. The event is scheduled from March 24 to 26 at the Grand Majestic Convention Center, Cebu City, and will be the biggest gathering of MHO/CHOs, RHPs, MOs, DOH representatives and other Amhop allies. For inquiries, call your respective Amhop provincial chapter officers or the convention secretariat at 822-9992 or 0918-9246058 and look for Fe

Aichi forging annexed to Toyota ecozone

TOYOTA Motor Philippines Corp (TMPC) signed today a supplemental agreement annexing Aichi Forging Company of Asia Inc (AFC), the largest forging company in Southeast Asia, to the Toyota Special Economic Zone (Toyota SEZ) in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

The agreement was signed by TMPC president Nobuharu Tabata and Philippine Economic Zone Authority (Peza) director general Lilia de Lima. AFC, represented by president Masaki Mori, also signed with Peza a registration agreement as a new Ecozone Export Enterprise.

Yuji Shibata, president of Aichi Steel Corp of Japan, thanked Toyota for accommodating their company into the Toyota-Special Economic Zone even if they supply to other assemblers. According to Shibata, "This shows the firm commitment of the Toyota Group in forging a stronger presence within the region and in helping the Philippine economy."

AFC produces forgings for transmission gears and shafts for Toyota Autoparts Philippines, Asian Transmission Corp, Isuzu Autoparts Manufacturing Corp, Laguna Autoparts Manufacturing, and Daiwa Seiko Philippines.

Shibata also thanked the Philippine government, through the Peza, for conferring upon AFC the status of Ecozone Export Enterprise. "This will further enable us to support the requirements of our customers not only in the Philippines but also within the Asian Region," said Shibata.

As a locator within the Toyota SEZ, AFC will further expand its capability to produce Toyota's metal forging requirements for propeller and axle units in Thailand and Indonesia. This is projected to increase revenues to $26 million by 2006 and generate more employment and technology transfer for highly-skilled Filipinos.

The company has already invested P147 million to increase production capacity. For 2004 and 2005, AFC plans to invest P208 million and P50 million, respectively, to double its production capacity of forged metal products.

Toyota's Tabata said the conferment of Ecozone Export Enterprise status to AFC is a very significant milestone in the development of autoparts manufacturing in the Philippines. "This kind of partnership makes the cluster for transmission and drive train manufacturers in the Philippines stronger and more competitive in the world market," said Tabata.

AFC is the latest autoparts maker to locate within the 82-hectare Toyota SEZ. The Toyota ecozone is now home to a number of investors performing a strategic role in the manufacture and exports of automobile products to Asean, Japan, and other parts of the world. In 2003, exports of companies located inside the Toyota SEZ totaled $126 million. It is projected to increase to $163 million by 2006.

"The expansion of the Toyota SEZ opens an array of opportunities for investors to partake the benefits offered by the government's program for a strong republic," said Antonio S. Abacan Jr, TMPC vice chair. "Our vision remains strong as we continue our commitment to build a progressive auto industry in the country."

People, Events & Products

E-mail: pr_pep@inquirer.com.ph
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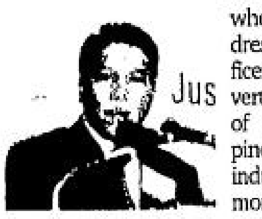
Editor Aries Espinosa

Great leaders emerge when we use the best of our culture–MVP

"AT THIS moment in the nation's history, the role your industry could play is this-to help discuss and understand what kind of leadership is needed-not just to survive the rat race-but to fulfill our national dream," thus said Manny Pangilinan, chair of PLDT, when he addressed the officers of the Advertising Board of the Philippines during its induction ceremony held March 9 at the Makati Shangri-La.



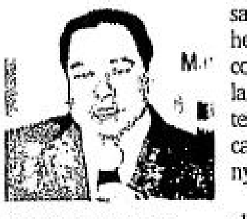
CERGE Remonde, AdBoard chair

To accomplish this, he said, advertising should delve into our national psyche-our values, traits, characteristics-and offer a portrait of the Filipino as a leader of this time, in contrast to the syndrome of defeat and apology often propagated in media.

Pangilinan also spoke of Alexander the Great's leadership lessons, which he said were equally relevant today and shows how great leaders emerge when they utilize the best aspects of their culture.

He enumerated Alexander's leadership lessons into three: that leadership is more art than science, that leadership is not just a job to do, and the role of social responsibility in leadership, as social conscience is now being required of leaders.

"The abiding lesson of Alexander's leadership is that great leadership results from a lifetime of learning, shaped by the values and characteristics of one's culture and society," said Pangilinan, head of the country's largest telecommunications company.



OSCAR Valenzuela, AdBoard executive director

Pangilinan also pointed out that a leader's responsibility to society finds fertile ground in the indigenous values of the Filipino. Though a number of observers take a negative view of the Filipino culture, he contested this assertion by describing the "flipside" of certain, but important Filipino values.

These are, he said, as identified by anthropologist F. Landa Jocano as *kapwa* (a shared identity), *damdamin* (emotions), and *dangal* (sense of honor).

"*Kapwa*, critics assert, encourages conformity and inhibit creativity among Filipinos. But doesn't kapwa, the desire to be in harmony with others, also imply teamwork and group solidarity, the kind of bonding that managers seek to insure company loyalty and work productivity? And didn't Alexander use kapwa to show his solidarity with his soldiers and their hardships?" Pangilinan asserted.

He also explained that *damdamin* refers to "refined or tender feelings" that enable leaders to behave professionally even in times of stress or conflict, and knowing how to be firm but considerate in dealing with others.

"When Filipino leaders are sensitive to employees and peers, they can push performance humanely. Certainly, Alexander was firm and resolute, but as history tells, he was also sensitive and fair," he stresses.

The third Filipino trait, as identified by Pangilinan, is *dangal*, or knowing what is morally right or feeling what is morally good, and acting in a way that is morally desirable.

"Filipino leaders who possess dangal are generous of their time and resources, and know how to repay people for work well done. Workers in turn reciprocate these acts of kindness with gifts of self," Pangilinan said.

Pangilinan also challenged the industry to do something significant as Filipino voters go to polls in less than two months. He proposed the industry to "up the ante" as he quoted one of the advertising industry's gurus Bill Bernbach who said, "All of us who professionally use media are shapers of society. We can brutalize it or we can lift it onto a higher level."

Justice Leonardo Quisumbing inducted AdBoard's new set of officers led by Cerge Remonde, who is in his second term as chair. Founded during the '70s, the AdBoard was formed with the task of protecting the Filipino consumer and supporting social responsibility through self-regulation.

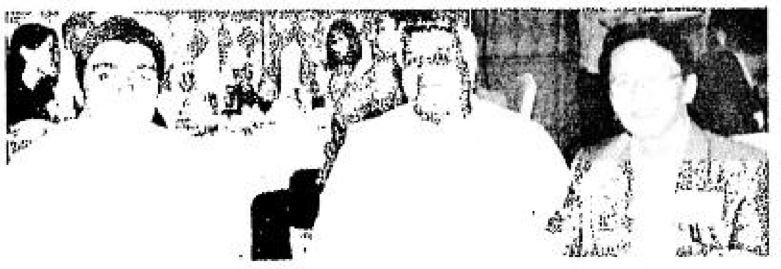
MANNY Pangilinan

INDUCTION OF THE 200 DIRECTORS

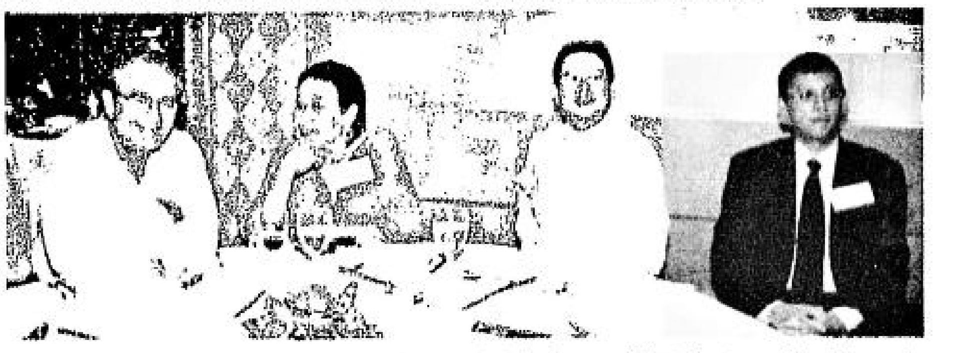
2004 ADBOARD officers and directors with the guest speaker and inducting officer. Back row, from left, are directors Jacinto 'Tong' Puno, Socorro Pitargue, Khalil O. Khodr Jr, Susan Dimacali, Paciencia Pineda, Belen M. Fernando, Hugo T. Perez Jr, Enrique Jose Estrada, Alden Castaneda, and Ruperto S. Nicdao Jr. Front row, from left, are Raul Alvarez, treasurer, Alvin R. Manacsa, vice chair, guest speaker Manny V. Pangilinan, Cerge M. Remonde, chair, inducting officer Justice Leonardo Quisumbing, Ma. Teresa V. Gargantiel, corporate secretary, Emilio L. Samson Jr, director, Pepito R. Olarte, PR officer, and Enrique Velez, director.

STANDING, from left, are Matec Gargantiel, Jimenez-Basic Advertising, Pepito R. Olarte, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Danny Ocampo, BusinessWorld, Elaine Go-Mapa, Belgosa Publishing, and Vicky Centeno, Woman's Home Companion. Seated, from left are Dr. Nonie Azarcon, executive director, Pana, Gigi Rodriguez, Citibank, and Josie Magtoto, Mr & Ms.

SHOWN from left are Jun Alcantara (Asia Brewery), Bea Jacinto, Judith Manipol, and Felix Berbano of Rajah Broadcasting, Andre Kahn (J. Romero Advertising), Meryl Schlachterman (Vigrapost Inc), and Maloli Espinosa-Manalastas (ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp).



FROM left are Inquirer's SVP for sales and marketing Renato R. Reinoso, AVP for advertising Kenny Nuyda and The Andresons Group managing director Atoy Babasa.



FROM left: Howard Belton, chair, Unilever, Linda Gamboa, executive director, Ad Foundation, Johnip Cua, president, Procter and Gamble, and March Ventoza, managing director, Leo Burnett.

SUSAN Dimacali, president, BBDO, and Venus Navalta, EVP, McCann-Erickson

MARIVIC Gonzales of Caballero and Associates and Angelito Pangilinan of Campaigns and Grey.

National skills 'Olympics' starts today

THE 11TH Philippine National Skills Competition (PNSC) will begin at 10 a.m. today, March 22 at the University of Nueva Caceres in Naga City, with government and private sectors leaders at the forefront of this much-awaited event.

Set to open the PNSC are Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas, Naga City Mayor Jesse M. Robredo, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda) Director General Alcestis M. Guiang and Region V (Bicol) Director Arturo S. Redoblado, and a huge crowd of spectators, participants and delegations from all over the archipelago.

"This so-called skills 'Olympics' starts with the ceremonial cutting of the chain by Guiang, Sto. Tomas and Robredo shortly before the competitors take their oath," Redoblado explained.

"The competitors are the heralded champions of the country's 16 regions, each sending a well-prepared contingent to this colorful weeklong event that also includes jobs and trade fairs and exhibits," Redoblado added.

They will compete in 9 trade events-computer-aided design and drawing, information technology, welding, electronic application, commercial wiring, ladies' dressmaking, automotive technology, cookery, and restaurant service-which will be held in Naga City, and two skills demos-agriculture and fishery-which will be staged in Iriga City.

The PNSC, which runs up to March 27, culminates the series of local, provincial, sectoral and regional contests earlier held nationwide.

The participants come from various training centers of Tesda and its accredited schools that provide technical and vocational education and training.

The winners will undergo further training to prepare them for the Asean and the World Skills Competitions.

Scheduled this year is the 5th Asean Skills Competition to be hosted by Vietnam, and in 2005 the 38th World Skills Competition slated in Helsinki, Finland.

With the theme "Galing Pinoy, Galing World Class", the national competition will showcase the rare talents of the Filipino youth and inspire the national pursuit of excellence and global competitiveness in the technical and vocational field.

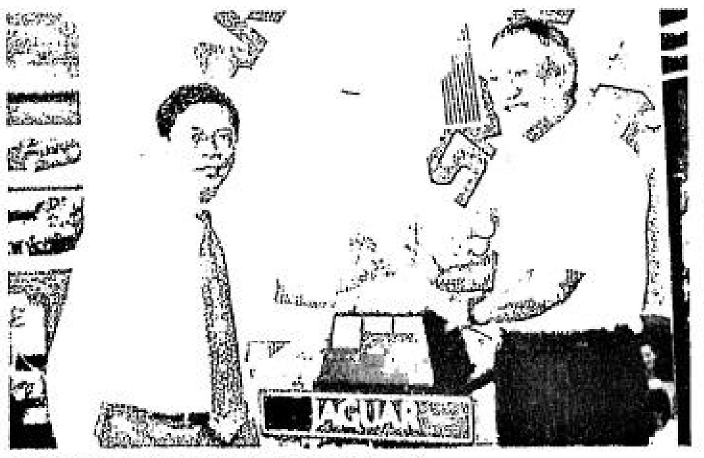
"The competition will also highlight the expertise of the country's technical and vocational schools and training centers in producing competent graduates, and provide a venue for technology sharing among them," Redoblado said.

Training activities for these competitions are under the umbrella of Tesda's Galing Pinoy Movement, a comprehensive program that develops and highlights the technical talents and expertise of Filipinos and includes scholarship grants and livelihood tools for deserving trainees in poor areas.

"Tesda's training programs form part of President Arroyo's efforts to equip the poor with technical skills that can help them rise from poverty," Redoblado added.

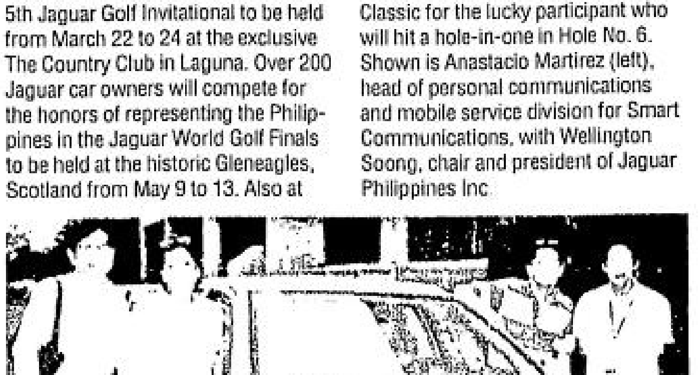
Operating under the Office of the President, Tesda is the sole government agency that is tasked to manage and supervise technical education and skills development in the country.

Tesda was created under Republic Act 7796, the "Technical Education and Skills Development Act of 1994," which integrates the functions of the former National Manpower and Youth Council, the Bureau of Technical Vocational Education, and the apprenticeship program of the Department of Labor and Employment.



SMART-JAGUAR PARTNERSHIP

Smart Communications has partnered with Jaguar cars to present the 5th Jaguar Golf Invitational to be held from March 22 to 24 at the exclusive The Country Club in Laguna. Over 200 Jaguar car owners will compete for the honors of representing the Philippines in the Jaguar World Golf Finals to be held at the historic Gleneagles, Scotland from May 9 to 13. Also at stake in the 5th Jaguar Golf Invitational is a 2004 Jaguar X-Type 2.1 Litre Classic for the lucky participant who will hit a hole-in-one in Hole No. 6. Shown is Anastacio Martirez (left), head of personal communications and mobile service division for Smart Communications, with Wellington Soong, chair and president of Jaguar Philippines Inc.



RDS ANNOUNCES TOYOTA VIOS WINNER

Robinsons Department Store (RDS) recently announced the winner of the Toyota Vios 1.3E it raffled off as part of the grand relaunch promo of its Galleria branch. Danilo Vibar (3rd from left) of Mandaluyong City drove home with the brand new car. He is shown here with wife Maribeth (2nd from left) and RDS operations managers Ruth Fucoy and Angeli Valenzuela (left and 4th from left, respectively). Aside from the car, RDS gave away P150,000 worth of gift certificates. The Galleria branch is RDS' flagship store

Beauty drink, anyone?

IF THERE is one fruit that could be considered the darling of the beauty industry, then it would have to be the grapefruit.

The grapefruit, for one thing, is good for the heart. It is the first fresh produce to receive the American Heart Association heart-check mark, giving it the distinction of being low in sodium, cholesterol and fat. It even aids weight loss by lowering the levels of insulin, which in turn curbs appetite.

Women's health expert Dr. Pamela Peeke, registered dietitian Carolyn O'Neil, Chinese actress Zhang Ziyi, celebrity trainer Nancy Kennedy and the Florida Department of Citrus all agree that grapefruit juice can also promote overall beauty and wellness with its high folate and potassium content plus five times the Vitamin C in orange.

Drinking grapefruit juice regularly reduces monthly bloating, keeps hair strong and builds collagen, the skin's natural supporting structure. It figures that salons and spas all over the world use grapefruit extract for their beauty treatments.

Aside from its weight loss and beauty benefits as confirmed by studies, grapefruit also helps those suffering from high blood pressure (adequate Vitamin C intake reduces risk of clogged arteries). It is good for people with sluggish livers, gallstones, arthritis, obesity, and ailments of the respiratory tract and the digestive system. This amazing fruit boosts the absorption of iron in the body and protects against cancer.

Austrian grapefruit juices have passed stringent quality control manufacturing standards comparable with tough European Union regulations. In the Philippines, the best-loved Austrian juice brand is Happy Day, which also happens to be Austria's market leader in juice category.

Happy Day Grapefruit Juice by Rauch is a perfect complement for weight loss and promotion of overall health and beauty. It is perfect for any time of the day, whether before meals to cleanse the palate, or even after exercise as thirst quencher to replenish lost energy and bodily fluids. Its rich Vitamin C content assists the body's natural morning detox cycle while its anti-aging properties keep skin young and supple.

Happy Day Grapefruit Juice is available at leading supermarkets nationwide.

Comelec satellite . . .

From page B18

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"You can readily do this using scripts. But the question here is: what is the level of encryption of data?" he added.

De la Cruz said that Pimentel's source was correct, and that cheating could be done using this high-tech scheme.

Pimentel pointed out that this transmission system is "an accessory" of the poll automation project that was voided by the Supreme Court.

"I don't know why the Comelec is still insisting on using (this system)," Pimentel added.

PIMENTEL

BSA monitoring operations of 4 illegal online software vendors

By Alexander F. Villafania
Contributor

THE BUSINESS Software Alliance (BSA) is monitoring the activities of four suspected software pirates in the Philippines who are illegally selling original software through the Internet.

The BSA would also work with the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to capture the software pirates within the next two to three months. The BSA is also being assisted by the local organization of Internet service providers, particularly the Philippine Internet Service Organization, to monitor the suspects.

Tarun Sawney, BSA Asia's director for enforcement said the four, who are yet to be identified, were found to have been selling assorted software from operating systems to anti-virus applications through P2P (peer-to-peer) sites.

The culprits were said to be selling these applications to other countries and are using a sophisticated payment system wherein a proxy acts as the collector.

If apprehended, they would be the first illegal Internet vendors to be captured in the Philippines.

"We've been tracking these four since the middle of last year. It took this long because we had to make sure that we gathered enough evidence to prosecute them," Sawney explained.

Sawney added that they were using a third-party application called a Web crawler that helped them trace the sources of these illegal trades. He said that the most common methods of selling were through P2P sites, which have a large membership base.

Web crawlers are the same systems used by the FBI to track down suspected authors of viruses and worms. Web crawlers are more powerful search engines that also track the IP address of a target source. Once a trace has been made, the Web crawler checks how many transactions are made through the address.

"About 90 percent of these trades are done in P2P sites. It's fairly easy to locate a source but there are thousands of them to be tracked," Sawney said.

Software sold illegally through the Internet are usually ordered through the P2P sites. The source usually burns copies of the software on CD and then ships them to the intended source. Upon delivery, a proxy would make the payment collection then transfer the amount to the bank account of the source.

"These are loose but highly organized people who only get in contact through mailing lists or private e-mail," he said.

Sawney said the BSA has tallied about 1,035 online software infringements in the Philippines.

PNP to be wired to Interpol 24x7 info exchange system

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

THE PHILIPPINE National Police (PNP) would soon be wired to the International Police's (Interpol) 24-hour information exchange system, which would give local authorities access to international criminal information and police alerts.

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Samsung exec: We want 30% of laser printer mart

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

SOUTH Korea's Samsung aims to take at least a 30-percent share of the laser printer market in the Philippines this year.

A newcomer in the local IT industry, Samsung is confident that it could eat up some of computer giant Hewlett Packard's market share, according to Sang Youl-eom, president and chief executive of Samsung Philippines.

HP is the top vendor for laser printers in the country.

Eom said about 15,000 to 20,000 laser printer units are sold in the country every year. Samsung will target the enterprise market for laser printers, he said.

However, HP Philippines does not feel threatened by the entry of Samsung in the local market.

In a separate interview, Anabelle Co, country category manager for commercial products of the Imaging and Printing Group of HP, said that the vendor has had a lot of competition in the past.

But so far, the computer vendor remains on top, Co added.

According to IDC, HP has 79.4 percent of the overall laser printer market as of 2003, while Canon has 8.8 percent of the market and Kyocera has 4.1 percent.

"(Samsung) is expected to spend money to push their brand. This has been the case with other previous competitors," Co said.

Asked if the vendor feels threatened with Samsung's entry, Co replied: "With our leadership for the past 18 years in Asia Pacific? We're confident we can maintain our leadership."

POWERTIPS

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For more tips, visit www.brainshare.com.ph. We would like to invite our readers to join The Powertips Group. Simply register online at www.brainshare.com.ph/register.htm and receive free tips via e-mail. For your comments, questions and suggestions, send your email to infochat@mozcom.com.

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"This is a time for a new decade for Informatics, a time for us to renew our mission and commitment to introduce a new brand of quality IT education. There are more challenges ahead, so expect big things to happen," Riingen said.

Led by Riingen, the Philippine operations of the Informatics Group formally began in January 1994. Since the establishment of the first Informatics Computer Institute in SM Megamall, Informatics has then grown to more than 60 centers and 100 partner schools under its Computer Integration Program.

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Comelec satellite . . .

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Editor Leo Magno

Comelec satellite transmission 'hackable': Pimentel

Lawmaker says transmission from provinces to Manila via VSAT is unsafe because data is unencrypted

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—The satellite transmission system that would be used to transmit electoral results from the provinces to the Commission on Elections' office in Manila is not safe from hackers, an opposition senatorial candidate told reporters.

Reelectionist Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said that his source from the United States pointed out that the system is vulnerable because it can be intercepted by commercially available devices.

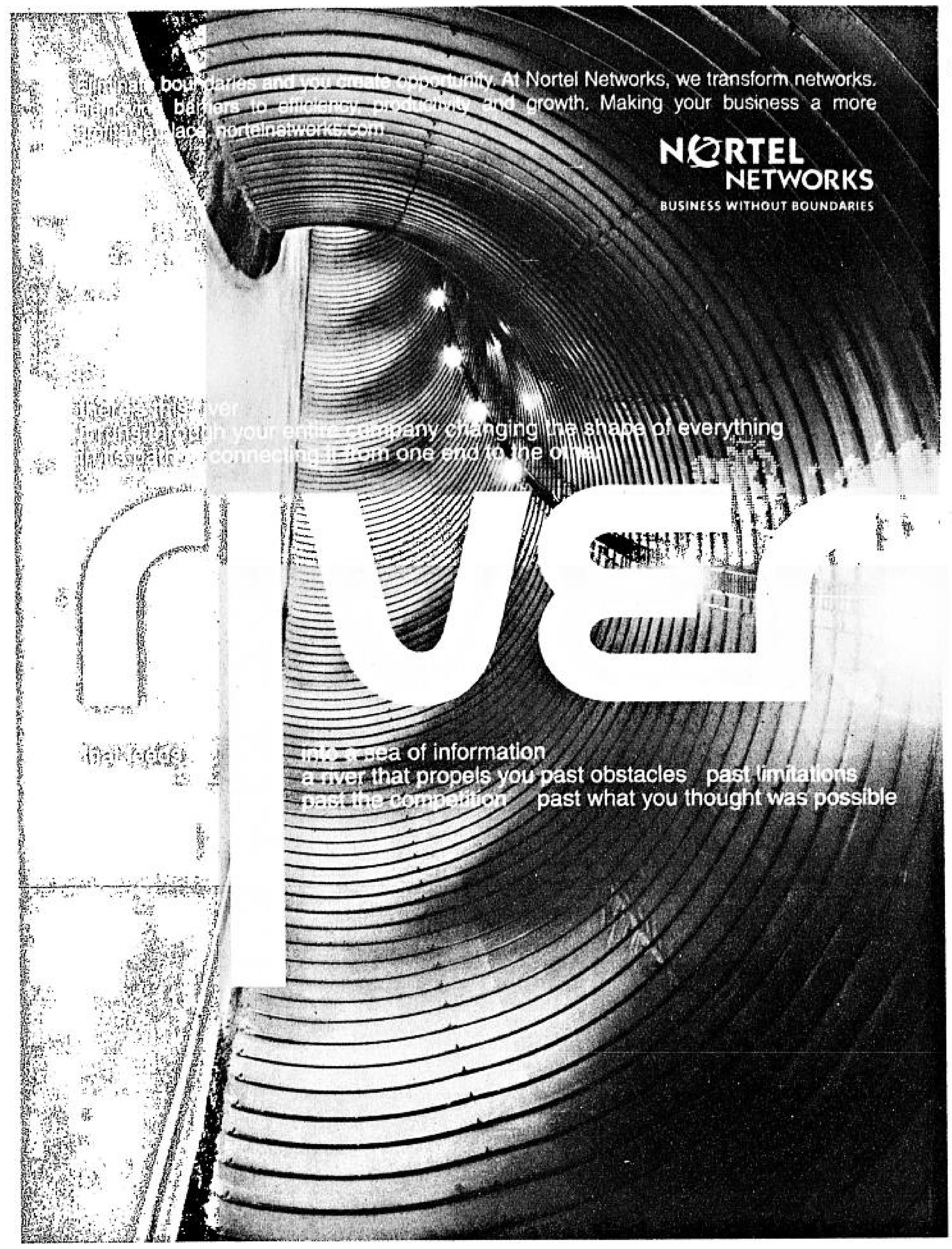
Pimentel said that a Russian-made device can intercept the transmission of the electoral votes without the knowledge of the Comelec.

The system, which uses a technology known as "very small aperture terminals" (VSAT) is unsafe because the data being transmitted is unencrypted, therefore it can be easily hacked," Pimentel added.

"So if they chose to transmit electoral data from provinces afar to Manila, it is possible that while the data is in transit, the figures could be massaged before it reaches the Comelec in Manila," he said.

In a separate interview, an information security expert said that Pimentel's revelation is possible "since most transmission over the air can be intercepted" especially if it is unencrypted.

COMELEC/B17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connecting it from one end to the other
into a sea of information
a river that propels you past obstacles past limitations
past the competition past what you thought was possible

Unblocking cell phone SIM should be declared a criminal act, says NTC

By Alexander F. Villafania
Contributor

THE NATIONAL Telecommunications Commission is set to recommend to Congress a law that would forbid the unblocking of mobile phones, a practice which allows subscriber identity modules (SIM) from any cellular service provider to be used on mobile handsets.

Unblocking involves the removal of the mobile operator locking mechanism in cellular phones. This allows the owner of the phone to place a SIM card from any cell phone service provider. On the other hand, doing so would invalidate the phone's warranty.

Most new cellular mobile phones in the market are packaged with a SIM card from Smart Telecommunications, Globe Telecoms or Sun Cellular. The phones are usually locked to the use of the service where the phones are bundled.

NTC Commissioner Ronald Solis said they are currently drafting the recommendation that would be submitted to Congress when it convenes after the May elections.

Solis said they would also recommend that unblocking be considered a criminal act instead of a civil violation.

"We're looking at either a new law that would prohibit unblocking or an amendment to the Revised Penal Code," Solis said.

Solis said the recommendation stems from an increasing number of complaints from victims of mobile phone thieves, saying that many stolen phones were being unblocked by phone repair shops.

Solis added that they would be requesting the mobile operators for statistics on the number of SIM cards sold and bought. The numbers would help them trace incidents of phone thefts or unblocking of phones.

If the measure is passed into law, Solis said the NTC would require the registration of all companies selling or repairing cellular phone equipment and services. He said there are thousands of these repair shops in the country, many of them operating illegally.

Penalties could include prison terms and fines, as well as pulling out the violator's business permit.

On the other hand, Solis said that even with a new law, unblocking would still continue.

"I'm only optimistic that penalizing these activities would minimize the number of phone thefts," he said.

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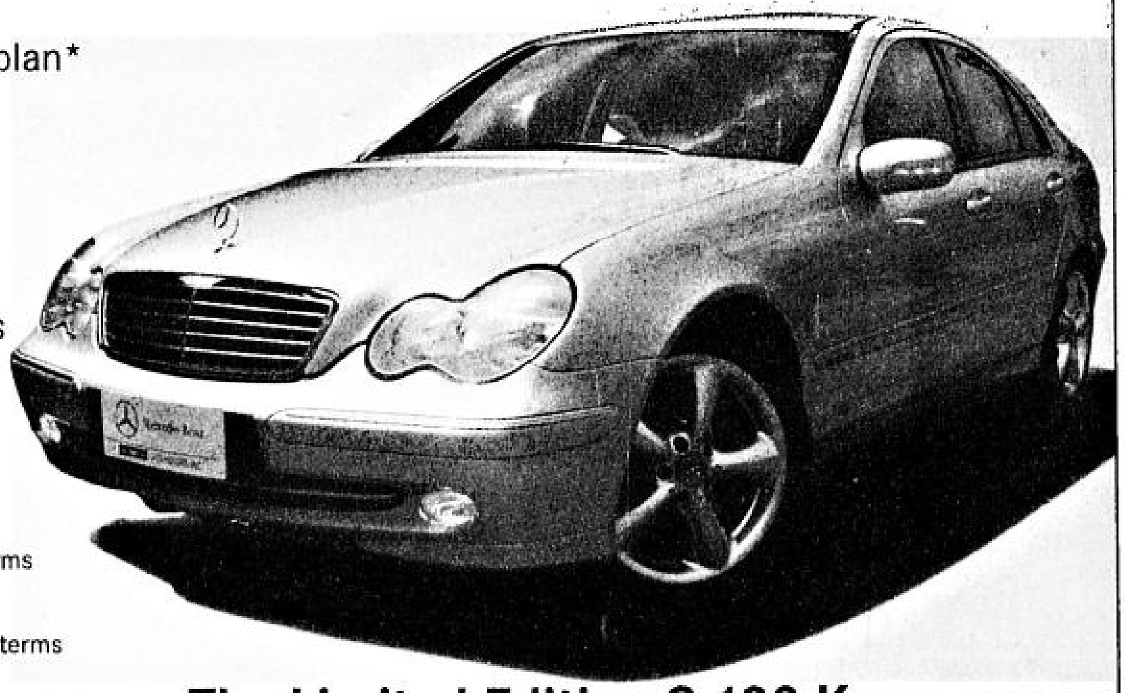

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'DotComGuy' seeks end to Internet life

WASHINGTON—He spent four years as "DotComGuy," including a year holed up in a Dallas home living entirely off the Internet.

Now he will go back to being just plain Mitch Maddox, legally changing his name back, to the delight of his wife, whom he met—where else?—on the Internet.

Maddox got worldwide attention in 2000 when he legally changed his name to DotComGuy, in a promotion aimed at demonstrating how the Internet could be used for food, furniture and other necessities.

With sponsors including United Parcel Service, 3Com, Network Solutions, Piper Jaffray and Travelocity, he spent the entire year of 2000 in his home in Dallas Texas, living off the Internet. All food and other necessities were ordered off the Internet and delivered to the home he never left.

But now, he wants to get his old name back, and is auctioning off the DotComGuy.com domain name.

"From a business perspective, I've taken DotComGuy as far as I can," he told AFP in an e-mail message. "Now, it's time to let someone else leverage the brand for their own success. On a personal level, I must admit it's been a lot of fun being 'DotComGuy,' but I'm glad that I can move on with my family name."

Spokesperson Kelly Kitchens said a confidentiality agreement and other contractual commitments kept DotComGuy out of the limelight over the past three years, although he has been working "an 8-to-5" job as a systems manager with a Dallas real estate firm.

"Basically he wants to change his name back," Kitchens said. "DotComGuy is on his driver's license, his passport, even on his marriage license."

What about his wife? Kitchens said DotComGuy met his wife on the Internet, but only after he completed his year in cyberspace.

"His wife is very happy to not be known as Mrs. DotComGuy," according to Kitchens.

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Addressing this stink called pork barrel

By Dennis M. Arroyo
Contributor

IT IS the weapon of traditional politicians (trapos) for their patronage maneuvers. It is the source of wrong spending priorities and much corruption. It is simply called pork barrel, or more formally known now as the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF). The money is provided for the Congress members and Senators who disburse it to their constituents.

The PDAF does not necessarily reach the local government nor does it enter its budget. If the trapo congressman and governor are political rivals, the money flows direct to favored barangays through the public works department. That is, the barangays that supported the winning congressman during the elections are given priority. The others just get promises.

Wrong spending priorities

As explained in a past article, the politics of pork barrel leads to twisted spending. Some Congressmen are known for rushing infrastructure projects when elections are getting near. Suddenly a lot of road-building is being done.

Projects may end up half-baked. For example, a road is being built in a barangay during one term. Then the opposing politician wins in the next election. So he starts building roads in other preferred barangays even without finishing the first.

Corrupted projects

Crooked deals are most rampant in infrastructure, and cheating by politicians is said to follow this procedure. The trapo congressman already has favored contractors, and he passes on the names to cronies in the public works department. In exchange for the deal, the contractor gives him an "SOP" (cut). The politician gets the money after the contractor is paid or waits for it during election campaign season.

All told, such cheating results in expensive highways that are short on length, width, or quality.

Vote-buying

Hanky panky in turn feeds the phenomenon of buying votes. During national elections, the trapo congressmen dangles money, not pork-funded projects.

Projects do not really click for national campaigns. The going rate for city mayor, depending on the resources of the candidate, can range from a low of P100 per head to a high of P1,000.

What can be done to address the stink that is pork barrel? Here is a wish list of options, some more feasible than others.

Lessons from abroad

Learn from other nations. The United States used to have pork barrel; it is an American invention. Today it has faded away, so the Philippines should learn from the US. Other countries may be able to share how they removed their own pools of patronage.

Adjust the salaries of politicians. Perhaps it would be better to hike their pay rather than give them pork barrel. In Japan and China, the local officials don't have pork barrel, but they enjoy generous salaries. The cost of raising executive salaries is quite small compared to the loss due to pork barrel.

To the local plan

All pork barrel funds should go to the local development plan. It may be all right to retain pork barrel as long as the funds stick to the development plan and feed the budget for the area. Perhaps the PDAF should be distributed proportionately in the districts.

Remove congressmen and senators from the development councils. The Local Government Code includes the Congressman or his representative as a member of the development councils. There are representatives even in the barangay development councils.

Changing the law

If Charter Change eventually pushes through, it would be great to insert a clear-cut division between the Executive and the Legislative. At present people bear with overlapping of functions—the legislator wants to implement projects, when that is the job of the executive.

Amend the Local Government Code. This carries the spirit of the above measure but is less radical. The different leagues can issue a resolution to amend the Local Government Code to come up with real decentralization. Congressmen will just focus on legislation.

Compromises

One admits that it is hard to remove pork barrel, because the House and the Senate, who make the decisions, are the parties that benefit from the PDAF. So half-measures may lead to at least partial success. For example, there was an initiative among Mati congressmen to remove funding for pork barrel while retaining the Representatives' power to choose projects in their provinces. It is a form of compromise and it can lead to the full phase-out of the pork barrel.

Rally around pork barrel as a full-blown public issue. Advocates should explain to the people that pork barrel leads to corruption and raising money for vote-buying. If it's a mass-based clamor, Malacañang and even the Congressmen will listen.

Resolutions to remove the PDAF can start the process. They should come from development councils, the various leagues and local government units. A signature campaign can collect millions of voices to fight this manna from hell. *Comments to darroyo@philonline.com.*

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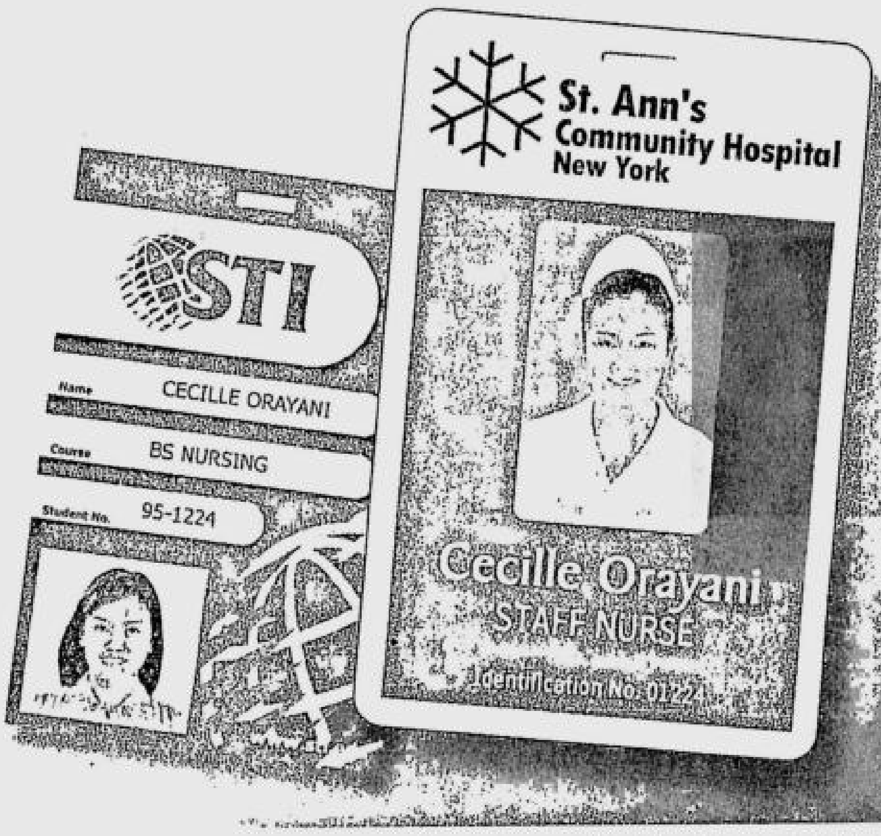

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Selecting a president

(First of two parts)

MAPping THE FUTURE

Manuel A. Alcuaz Jr.

VERY few voters have comprehensive criteria for selecting a president.

One camp looks at experience and education. Another camp says sincerity and love for the poor are most important. While a third camp seems to think that the best debater is the best choice for President.

I don't have a well defined process for selecting a president, since we only do this exercise every six years.

However, I have had extensive experience in selecting applications, computer systems and IT based solutions.

In the system selection process, we usually start by defining the objectives of the system then the criteria that would be used in selecting the best alternative.

We would like a president who would lead our country to prosperity and solve the nation's biggest problems.

I personally believe that one of our biggest problems is the prevailing environment of graft and corruption.

One of the most intelligent Presidents the Philippines ever had was Marcos and he was ably assisted by a collection of brilliant technocrats such as Cesar Virata, Jaime Laya and Roberto Ongpin.

While the technocrats were intelligent and personally honest, the Marcos cronies were very corrupt.

Even good projects fail when burdened with kickbacks and payoffs.

The most beneficial bid for government projects should not be selected on the basis of the highest bribe!

In the process of asking people what the criteria for selecting a president should be, I can almost guess their choice for the presidency.

I have observed many biased bids and have noted that corrupt vendors usually try to influence the criteria to favor their product or service.

We therefore have to be careful in identifying the criteria we will use to make our selection.

The criteria should help select the best available product, system, solution—president.

In the choice of systems as well as people, there are trade-offs that have to be made.

In selecting a system, there are trade-offs in criteria such as functionality, reliability, ease of use and cost.

Sometimes, one must settle for "not the best" because of budgetary constraints.

I have tried to come up with comprehensive criteria that would lead to a choice that is aligned with our objectives.

I have come up with six criteria clusters:

- Character
- Personal capacity
- Independence of decisions
- Education, experience and self-education
- Wisdom, application of knowledge and skills
- Platform

Character

Character is the most important.

A president with superior intelligence and skills can either use them for selfish objectives or for the good of the nation.

We have seen in Marcos how bad character led him and the nation to ruin.

Above all else, we should be looking for a president who is and will remain

- Sincere
- Honest
- Selfless and unselfish
- Hardworking

Rather than go into a formal definition of terms, I will define through example and comparison.

Many people would find it difficult to rank our dear President Gloria very high on sincerity, honesty and selflessness.

But she is definitely tops in being hardworking. She is up there with FVR. I doubt if anyone would rate Erap as hardworking in matters of state.

FPJ, Roco and Villanueva seem to be quite high on all four criteria. Lacson is a mystery but seems to be quite hardworking.

Personal capacity

To fulfill the work of the presidency, the president we elect must have:

- native intelligence or IQ
- emotional intelligence or EQ
- charisma
- health and stamina

Gloria, Roco, Villanueva and Lacson are generally considered to have high IQ. FPJ is thought to have low IQ since he is a high school drop-out.

However, actors, directors and preachers have to understand human emotions.

FPJ and Villanueva should be better than the rest in this department.

Charisma is very important to get people to follow, particularly when sacrifices have to be made. Villanueva has proven charisma, FPJ has possibilities. Lacson seems to have it. Gloria and Roco are low in this criteria.

Health and stamina seem to be among Gloria's strengths. She goes to friends' wakes at midnight, and this is good. But she also runs around the country to inaugurate bridges and have her picture taken with criminals and this is ridiculous.

I am a little worried about FPJ's health and stamina but this is based on visual observation, not on medical data.

Independence of decisions

It is unfortunate that in order to wage a presidential campaign, one needs billions of pesos in campaign contributions and the support of powerful local politicians.

We have seen how President Gloria has to keep misfits in important positions to pay old political debts or to guarantee support in the May elections.

Definitely, our President has flunked this criteria.

Roco and Villanueva seem not to be beholden to politicians and power groups. Lacson, if he really has billions for his campaign, is a question mark.

Fernando Poe is very interesting because he did not work to be a presidential candidate. Politicians came to him and convinced him to run.

When contributions come, he sends thank you letters but he does not do fund raising.

Poe is in a unique position of being catapulted to the presidency without negotiating away his independence to do good.

He will owe millions of people his election if he does get elected. But that is fine because his objective is to do good for the greatest number. (To be continued).

(The article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The author is co-chair of the MAP ICT Committee and President of Systems Sciences Consult, Inc. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph)

THE SIGHT of Filipinos bringing home balikbayan boxes is a common one in US airports.

Tales of the missing 'balikbayan' boxes

By Ma. Salve Duplito
Inq7.net

AMANDA Cruz (not her real name) was brimming with excitement while packing her 'balikbayan' box (big package) for her family.

Sending a balikbayan box has been an annual ritual for Amanda, so she could bring home a slice of the life she now enjoys in Toronto, Canada.

Amanda's three-year old nephew has been telling his classmates in school that he would be receiving toys from Canada.

The box was supposed to arrive eight weeks after it was picked up from Amanda's residence or way before Christmas.

The box never came.

The Department of Trade and Industry has observed an increasing number of missing balikbayan boxes, which accounted for about one-third of shipping and freight-related complaints to the Philippine Shippers Bureau from 2001 to 2003.

Based on official figures from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, around 900,000 Filipinos work abroad as of end-2003, both in sea-based and land-based occupations. Add to this those who have permanently migrated and you now have an idea how many overseas Filipinos might be sending balikbayan boxes home on a regular basis.

Balikbayan boxes often contain an unusual collection of things—from iodized salt to appliances, dolls to corned beef, laundry soap to socks. In a country where even far-flung villages have one or two individuals working or living abroad, sending home things has become a custom.

However, unscrupulous freight forwarders have put the fruits of Filipinos' labor at risk. "Given the heavy traffic of packages sent from abroad by Overseas Filipino Workers, people should be careful in choosing their cargo agency and/or freight forwarders," former Trade secretary Mar Roxas said in a letter to Philippine embassies last December.

Amanda says Uniglobe, the freight forwarder who failed to deliver her package, has stopped operating in July 2003 but continued to accept cargoes until December of the same year. Its warehouses in Toronto and in Sta. Mesa, Manila had been closed, even as it continued to make empty promises to Amanda and other Toronto residents that the packages would be delivered. Eventually, its phone lines were no longer reachable.

PSB said there had been several cases in 2003 when freight forwarders abandoned their cargo at the Bureau of Customs "for financial reasons." Several cases also involved theft of some of the contents.

It would be time-consuming and tedious to check and double-check the profile of freight forwarders and make sure they are accredited by the government, but doing that would save a lot of money.

Here are tips from the PSB:

1. Don't just check the profile of the firm; make sure you double-check its Philippine counterpart.

2. Call PSB's Quick Response Unit at (02) 8905133 or go to the DTI website at dti.gov.ph to get an updated copy of the list of accredited freight forwarders/cargo handlers if the cargo is via sea freight. If via airfreight, check with the Civil Aeronautics Board.

3. Ask for transport documents such as Bill of Lading/House Bill of Lading in addition to the receipt for charges you paid.

4. Prepare and submit a packing list of items to be shipped with its declared value.

5. Monitor the movement of your cargo from origin to final destination by constant communication with the forwarding company. Ask the forwarder to furnish you the shipping line, voyage number, container number, the estimated time of departure/arrival and delivery of your cargo.

6. Find out if the freight forwarder has adequate insurance coverage.

7. Tell those who will receive the package to check the package with the Philippine agent even before the estimated date of delivery.

Amanda is not taking this standing down. She has asked the Bureau of Customs and e-mailed the office of Executive Secretary Roberto Romulo in the hope that the government would help her retrieve her boxes.

A whole community of Toronto residents—some with boxes full of wedding pictures, memorabilia and all the things they wanted to bring home when they retire—are still hopeful their precious belongings would be returned, and the perpetrators punished.

As with every scam, people should arm themselves with information and watchfulness against unscrupulous firms. But more importantly, they also need government to run after those that put the fruits of their labor at risk.

Post-garments quota Philippines

By George T. Siy
President, Confederation of Garments Exporters of the Philippines

IN a position paper submitted to the House Committee on Labor and Employment, the labor group Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino claimed that more than 5,000 workers in the textile and garments industry lost their jobs in the second semester of 2003.

About the same number of daily wage earners, have been severely affected by the shortened work week, work rotation, and temporary closure of some garment and textiles factories.

The recent closure and layoffs is only the beginning. Within the next 12 months before the elimination of the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing (ATC) quota system and at least two years after, it is expected that the smaller enterprises comprising the estimated 1,200 garment and textiles firms in the country employing approximately 400,000 workers will face heavy challenges for survival.

The WTO replaced the Multifibre Agreement with the ATC in January 1995 as an intermediate mechanism to the complete abolition of the quota system by January 2005. Being in existence for more than two decades, the MFA was intended to be a temporary arrangement which essentially sets the rules for international trade, to include quota allocations in textiles and garments made from cotton, wool and synthetic fibre made in developing countries for export to developed nations.

The MFA basically fueled the growth of the textile and garments industries in developing countries that have been heavily dependent on quota allocations.

Losing the edge

About 10 years ago, the garment export industry was a recognized sunrise industry in the Philippines, being a major player in exports to the USA. The opening of communist countries in East Europe, China and Vietnam made the Philippines lose its wage edge of $6.00 per day versus $1.50 per day of the emerging economies but we were still ahead in terms of experience.

NOBODY seems to be addressing the plight of some 400,000 Filipino garments workers.

In 10 years, their skill levels and infrastructure, especially China, had already caught up to match the best garment and textile company in the Philippines.

The average Philippine worker's overall output is a little over half of the international required standard average to be competitive in the global market. Some local exporters approximate this average, a few surpass it, but the greater number are left far behind.

Garment production is a highly labor-intensive industry where each garment is completed through the efforts of a production line of workers. Hence, competitiveness in this industry for a global market requires continuous training, learning and an industrious attitude of the worker, the investment in studies and planning by the businessman, and the infrastructure and processing efficiency of the government bureaucracy.

Productivity

On the whole, it is productivity, not industrial peace, that has been the main issue in garments in the last few years. Many factories today will not be able to survive with current wage rates given the productivity level output.

Consumers constantly shop around for the highest quality and the lowest prices forcing retail outlets to source the same and maintain their profit margins. Pressure is placed on buying agents, trading companies, contractors and down the line to the manufacturers who have to squeeze in their cost plus profit justifying their demands for higher output for lower wages from workers.

But it is unfair to focus the blame solely on the worker, since businessmen have their role to play in productivity. A good number of garment factories are located in high-urbanized cities where the cost of living is relatively high compared to the rural areas.

Compared to neighboring countries, wage rates may be low but their daily earnings are enough to sustain a home and meals. Each average Philippine income-earner has to support an average of five unproductive dependents.

The experience of local manufacturers that have been to China indicate that Chinese workers achieved the same skill—set in half the number of months it took the average Filipino worker. Such was not attributed to efficiency rather because the Chinese simply spent more time at it, consciously internalizing their work in more dimensions than their immediate task.

Further, holidays, baptisms, payroll dates, pregnancies, fiestas, or celebrations did not cause breaks in the production balancing and planning. It did not take priority over working as many hours as they can be paid.

There is a higher number of employees who aspire and work toward being an entrepreneur themselves which drives them to increase the knowledge level, dynamism, and investment in the industry.

Comparatively, our local entrepreneurs have to be more anticipatory and persistent in keeping clients happy, and in cultivating their markets. They need to be more knowledgeable in the technical details of their business to be able choose the right technologies for our current situation. They must be able to distinguish where the profits are to be made or where they cannot be made. Incentives to labor for good performance should be par for the course.

Moreover, they also need to internationalize their network, skill-set, and standards. Hongkong, Taiwanese and Japanese businessmen move to wherever it is more economical to put up a factory which can yield higher profits. But only a few Filipino or even *Tsinoy* businessmen will consider moving operations to another country.

Garments manufacturing is a prime example of an internationally mobile industry. In an increasingly borderless business environment, our workers, businessmen and government need to adapt to today's reality of mobile capital and sourcing in most industries. The market, not our politics, defines the range of what we need to provide. We need to be able to reinvent our business, our country from time to time, as the conditions around the world changes.

We should not let the garment and textile manufacturing industry disappear entirely from the Philippines, at least not that quickly. While there are other business sectors to enter, industrial produce is important because an economy needs balance in capabilities to give it resilience, a level of security and the know-how to be a base for other activities. Also, the country needs an employment source, especially for women workers, to fill the intermediate level of skill between agriculture and information or service fields.

Overseas artists band together to help industry

THE WORLD Bank estimates Filipino workers overseas send home a total of $6.4 billion a year through the formal banking system. Other estimates range far higher as a good fraction of remittances are sent home through fellow workers going home, and other informal means. Of this amount, $2 billion is said to come from overseas performing artists.

As various militant voices are raised in concern over the status and protection of migrant Filipino workers, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has acknowledged the work of the Philippine Entertainment Exporters and Promotions Association (Peepa), Philippine Association of Recruitment Agencies Deploying Artists (Parada), and Reliable Entertainers Promoters Association (Repa), which are composed of placement agencies deploying performing artists such as musicians, singers and dancers mostly to Japan, Singapore and Taiwan.

Peepa president Christie Gatchalian-Buan, Parada president Jing Langomez and Repa president Balbir K. Singh, which are pioneer organizations established several decades ago, have initiated the signing of memoranda of agreement with their counterpart organizations of employers in the host country, and establishing welfare monitoring systems to protect the welfare of artists. Both associations also actively participated in the formulation of the Artist Record Book system and in making such a system operational.

These associations also work for policies favoring the industry while protective of the interest of legitimate stakeholders. All three have joined forces to establish the Confederated Associations of Licensed Entertainment Agencies (Calea). The formation of Calea today makes it possible for the sector of licensed entertainment agencies to speak with one voice and undertake common efforts for the betterment and growth of the industry.

Christie Gatchalian-Buan is both President of Peepa and Calea today with Jing Langomez as chair. The twin responsibilities weigh heavily on her shoulders, but she shrugs it all off. "Calea is very much aware of all the problems of our industry which stems from unscrupulous people who are into manipulating situations to be able to bring untrained performers to other countries. Somehow, these people are able to get hold of the ARB and make it to Japan, where they practice prostitution and are caught."

"For licensed agencies like Calea members, we are always responsible for our talents. If they get sick, we have them hospitalized, and counseling is also available if they have emotional problems. At the extreme, if they need to be brought back to the Philippines, we make all the arrangements," Christie continues.

"The women that oftentimes get victimized are those whose managers were able to get ARBs illegally then send these talents out of the country. But when they get to the destination, they cannot really perform because they do not have the correct training and attitude. Should they be fired because they do not have the proper training for performing, they run away or even engage in prostitution just to be able to stay in that country."

She expressed the hope that the government will continue to police its own ranks and get rid of government employees who steal ARBs and sell them at P50,000 to illegitimate talent scouts and managers. "These illegally deployed women destroy the reputation of legitimate talents who work very hard through at least 2 to 6 months of hard training to dance and sing."

As expected, the Calea is at the forefront of fighting for the interest of legitimate and well-trained OPAs from the Philippines.

Reduced confidentiality of income tax returns

Corporate & Securities Info
Raul J. Palabrica

IN THE name of public interest, the veil of confidentiality that hangs over the income tax returns of private taxpayers, individual and corporate, has been slightly lifted.

Where before only the Commissioner of Internal Revenue and, in applicable cases, the courts can take a look at those sensitive documents, now the Ombudsman is authorized to do the same if he believes their filers are in cahoots with corrupt government officials or involved in anomalous government transactions.

Invoking her authority under the National Internal Revenue Code, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo recently issued Executive Order No. 251.

The EO requires the Bureau of Internal Revenue to make available to the Ombudsman or his duly authorized representatives the ITRs of individual and corporate taxpayers that may be relevant or material in the investigation of erring public officials.

The EO is aimed at strengthening the government's campaign against public officials, whether currently employed or no longer in the service, who are suspected of graft and corruption, plunder or accumulation of ill-gotten wealth.

Although the Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth that public officials are obliged to submit yearly have been helpful, the ITRs are expected to add more teeth to the government's anti-graft efforts.

Request

To get copies of the ITRs of an official under investigation and those of the members of his immediate family and relatives within the fourth degree of consanguinity or affinity, all the Ombudsman has to do is make a written request for them to the BIR.

The request should contain a certification that the official is under investigation for any of the offenses mentioned, with the title and docket number of the case properly indicated.

(In layman's language, the fourth degree of relationship is the equivalent of "first cousin" in either side of the family and the in-laws.)

If the Ombudsman thinks he needs the ITRs of people other than the official's relatives or separate corporate entities, such as, partnerships, associations and corporations, to complete his probe, his request for those documents should include an explanation of their relevance or connection to the investigation.

Confidential

Once these conditions are met, the BIR is obliged to expeditiously make available to the Ombudsman certified copies of the ITRs of the taxpayers concerned for the relevant years.

The EO also states that the ITRs furnished by the BIR shall remain confidential and shall be used by the Ombudsman solely in connection with his investigation of graft-related cases.

Additionally, any information contained in the ITRs cannot be made public at any time during or after the conclusion of the proceedings, except if it forms part of any order, resolution or decision rendered in the cases investigated, or as evidence in court or any other proceeding that is within the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman.

(Postscript: Under the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, any government official or employee who divulges to unauthorized persons valuable information of a confidential character that he learned on account of his position or releases that information in advance of its authorized release date is liable for imprisonment for not less than one year but not exceeding 10 years.)

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Per DTI-NCR Permit # A3-236. Series of 2004.

RP gets low marks from fund managers

By Rico Hizon
Contributor

INTERNATIONAL BUZZ

THE YEAR 2004 has so far been a roller-coaster ride for the Philippine stock market.

A volatile political environment, the reports of the removal of the country from the investment portfolio of the largest US pension fund California Employees Retirement System (CalPERS) continue to weigh on sentiment. This week, I interviewed two of my regular guests on BBC's Asia Business Report, Devan Kaloo from Aberdeen Asset Management and Hans Goetti, a Director from the Citigroup Private Bank.

I asked them if the Philippine stock market was a viable investment destination.

Q: What is your outlook for the Philippine stock market with elections just around the corner?

Kaloo: The political noise and drama mean volatility in the markets for now. The markets will be weak ahead of elections.

Investors (both equity & bond) will be focused on the new president's policies (particularly with regard to the economy) and more importantly—implementation.

Goetti: The market outlook is dominated by uncertainty regarding the election.

But I would argue that most of the uncertainty is already priced into the market.

Markets are smart, and I would not be surprised to see a rally in the Philippines once the election is over, regardless of who wins. However, this rally could start from a lower level than where we are today. 1300 is a good support.

Q: What are the other risks apart from the elections?

Kaloo: Fairly long list—from a macro perspective 1) an unfriendly political system which does not allow the government to push ahead with needed reforms easily. 2) corruption is another problem. 3) poor state of the country's finances.

From a micro perspective—a) Narrow stock market—dominated by few large cap stocks, b) High degree of stock ownership concentrated in too few hands, c) Poor operating environment.

Goetti: On the macro economic side, there could be a negative surprise regarding the government deficit.

If it comes in higher than expected, this could help push up interest rates.

Furthermore, food price inflation is a possible concern.

Q: Would you advice your clients to invest in the market despite the risks?

Kaloo: I think the Philippines offers some interesting stocks—but you need to be very selective and patient.

If the investor has an appetite for risk, then yeah, one should look at the Philippines.

Goetti: We are currently not advising clients to buy.

Q: How does the Philippine market stack up against its Asian neighbors?

Kaloo: Not well—there is lower growth, richer valuations and on-going unresolved political issues—but there are opportunities everywhere if you bother to search.

Goetti: The performance of the market has been quite good, more or less in line with other Asian markets. However, the fundamentals are quite different from let's say Taiwan, another market where political uncertainty is quite high before the election, which takes place on March 20.

In Taiwan, the economy is showing signs of renewed strength, whereas in the Philippines, it is hard to find signs of a real recovery.

Q: What is your current exposure in the Philippine market?

Kaloo: In our regional accounts, we hold only one Philippine stock—Ayala Land.

Goetto: Our current exposure to the Philippines is zero, even in purely Asian portfolios.

Q: What sectors and stocks would you recommend to your international clients in the event the dark clouds clear in the Philippines?

Kaloo: Buy companies with good, honest management, strong balance sheets and robust business models.

Companies that will survive and even capitalize on the seemingly inevitable volatility in the market and economy.

Goetti: From my perspective I would stick to blue chips, like PLDT, and once the economy is showing signs of a pick-up the banks would be very attractive.

(Rico Hizon anchors BBC World's Asia Business Report from Monday to Friday. He is based in Singapore. Send feedback at rico.hizon@bbc.co.uk)

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0784, Series of 2004. See posters and flyers for promo details.

BPI Madness Supplement

BPI Credit Card: The leader in real 0% Installment Financing marks year 10

NOW on its 10th year, BPI Credit Cards is holding its 32nd Installment Madness at the Glorietta, Ayala Center, Makati City, from March 10 to 28.

BPI Credit Cards continue to attract a strong and potent market due to its ever-growing popularity. In 1994, BPI Credit Cards launched the first appliance madness at the Glorietta with only ten participating manufacturers. Now it has grown to 53 participating merchants and partner dealers, thereby changing the landscape of shopping convenience.

With its 10th year celebration, BPI credit cardholders using their BPI Express Credit or BPI Classic/Gold/Petron and BPI Edge MasterCard get to enjoy more choices.

What's more exciting is that with a minimum purchase of P3,000, cardholders will be given an instant prize. Not only that, for every P1,000 purchase, cardholders will get an additional 10 Frequent User points which will be reflected on their next billing statement.

And BPI Credit Cards advantage never stops, cardholders can get a chance to be one of the ten lucky winners on the weekly, midnight madness and grand raffle.

To date, the BPI Installment Madness has remained the longest running and most successful installment promotion in the industry. With the BPI Credit Card, easy payment schemes, discounts and perks make shopping a pleasure.

Only the BPI Express Credit Cards carry two credit lines in one credit card: the regular credit line and the SIP (Special Installment Plan) line.

The SIP is a unique feature exclusive to all BPI Credit Cards. It's the credit line that lets cardholders purchase high ticket items on different installment terms to make them more affordable and within reach. Having a separate line for installment purchases allows BPI to offer real 0 percent to its credit cardholders. Thus, cardholders do not have to worry about being charged for hidden fees on their purchases. They are not surcharged for what they buy.

So make sure you're there at this milestone madness and take advantage of the perks that your BPI Credit Card brings.

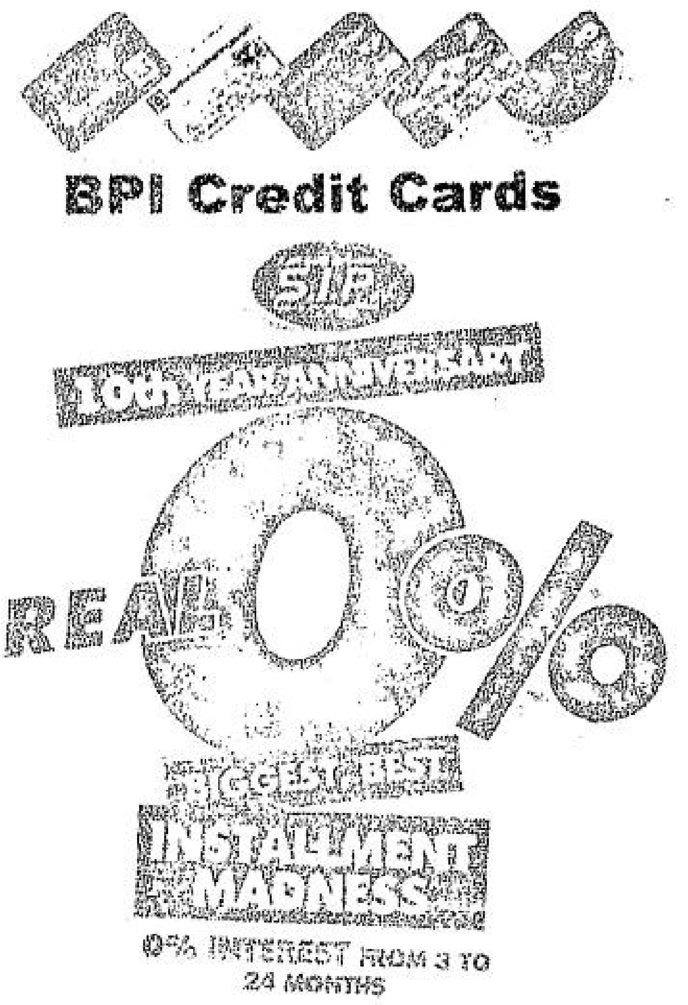
Participating brands and dealers are: General Electric, Whirlpool, Sharp, LG Collins, Akira, White Westinghouse, Hyundai Electronics, Ariston, American Home, CCAC and CASC, Sony, Aiwa, Kolin, Panasonic, Pioneer, Fedders, JVC, Philips and Promac.

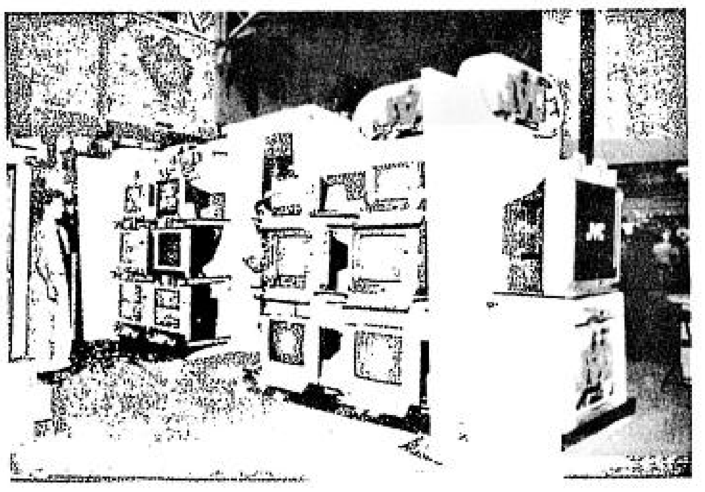
Computers are: Electroworld, Silicon Valley, The Computer Authority, Villman, Compex and Intel Microelectronics.

Furniture are: Ambiance One, Home Options, Blims and Home Plus.

Other participants are: Tefal, Casio, Canon, Kodak, Naomi Jewelry, Semicon, Globe, Sportshouse, DPSI-Yamaha, Ambassador Home Electronics, Collins International and 5th Avenue.

Participating dealers are: Abenson, Ambassador Appliance, Anson's Emporium, Automatic Center, Sogo Appliance, SM (Star) Appliance, Waltermart, Western Marketing, and J & R Appliance (store level only).





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PER DTI- NCR PERMIT NO. 0988 SERIES OF 2004

Are you sure your 0% interest installment purchase is for real?

YOU have just purchased a new Plasma TV with your credit card on installment. You are thinking "What a great deal! - I'm paying for this on installment with no interest!" because you took advantage of the 0 percent interest offer from your credit card. You find yourself thanking your credit card for what you believe is a good buy and a neat payment scheme.

Or is it?

Start looking closely - especially if you are a credit cardholder who takes advantage of the deferred payment scheme - that is, paying just the minimum amount due or 5 percent of the total outstanding balance every month. Chances are, your 0 percent installment purchase actually gets charged interest.

How does this happen?

Check the billing statement that reflects the first monthly installment of your 0 percent interest purchase. Is the monthly installment recorded as part of all other regular purchases you made recently, i.e. grocery bills, gasoline expense, a new dress? If it is, then the total outstanding balance for the month includes the monthly installment amount in the computation of the minimum amount due - the amount you need to pay to keep your account current.

If you pay the minimum and not the total outstanding balance, the unpaid portion will be charged interest. By the next billing statement, your "supposed" installment purchase on 0 percent interest has been charged interest! And so it goes on with every entry of your monthly installment until you complete your payment.

How can you truly enjoy the advantage of a 0 percent installment offer?

When you use BPI Express Credit Card, BPI Classic and Gold MasterCard Petron - BPI MasterCard and BPI Edge MasterCard to purchase items on 0 percent interest, you are assured of absolutely no interest. This is because of the way your minimum due every month is computed.

A BPI Credit Card has two separate credit lines in one card, where one line is used for regular transactions and the other credit line is for SIP or Special Installment Plan transactions. With this arrangement, non-installment or regular purchases are treated separately to get the minimum amount due on regular purchases. Afterwards, the monthly installment amount is added to the minimum due - making sure that what you planned to pay will be paid off when you keep your card current and that you do not incur interest when you shouldn't not be charged interest.

In the end, you enjoy a good and honest deal.

Installment purchasing via credit cards is indeed a helpful payment scheme. 0 percent interest installment offers make it a great benefit. But don't you wish you can enjoy exactly what was promised.

With BPI Credit Cards, the 0 percent promise is always delivered.

BPI Madness: Great value for money

Only high quality products and easy installment terms take centerstage at the Madness.

BPI Credit Cards
SIP
REAL 0%
INSTALLMENT MADNESS
0% INTEREST FROM 3 TO 24 MONTHS

VALUE for hard-earned money is exactly what you're getting at BPI Credit Cards' 32nd Installment Madness "Real 0%". The latest Installment Madness takes place on March 10 and ends on March 28 at the Glorietta, Ayala Center, Makati City.

BPI Credit cardholders are by now familiar with the must-visit Installment Madness. Only high quality products and easy installment terms take centerstage at the Madness. And, of course, it's true: real 0 percent is being offered on high-ticket items from participating merchants.

This shopper's paradise has the following appliance brands participating: General Electric, Whirlpool, Sharp, LG Collins, Akira, White Westinghouse, Hyundai Electronics, Ariston, American Home, CCAC & CASC, Sony, Aiwa, Kolin Panasonic, Pioneer, Fedders, JVC, Philips and Promac.

Furniture items are from Ambiance One, Home Options, Blims, and Home Plus. Computers are from Electroworld, Compex, Intel Micro Electronics, The Computer Authority, Silicon Valley, and Villman. Also participating are Tefal, Casio, Canon/Kodak, Naomi Jewelry, Semicon, Globe, Sportshouse, DSPI-Yamaha, Ambassador Home Electronics, Collins International and 5th Avenue.

The participating dealers are Abenson, Automatic Center, Ansons, Ambassador, SM Appliance, Sogo, Waltermart, Western and J & R Appliance (store-level).

BPI credit cardholders of Express Credit, BPI Classic/Gold/Petron/Edge MasterCard can find their hard-earned money's worth at the Madness and stretch their peso, thanks to the Special Installment Plan (SIP), a unique built-in feature exclusive to all BPI credit cards.

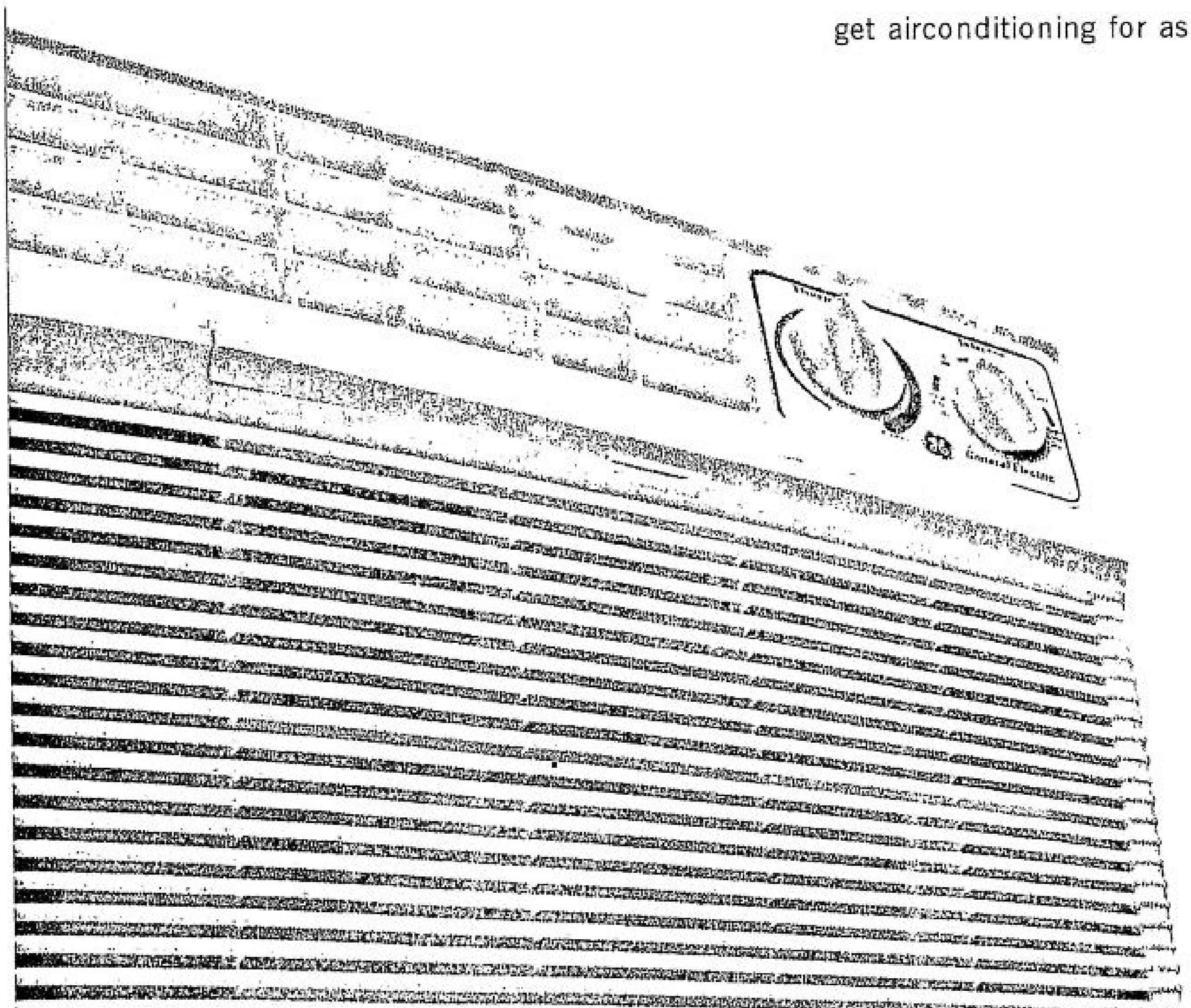
The SIP is an additional credit line that does not deplete the card's regular credit limit. It is a unique feature to all BPI credit cards and is best used for buying big-ticket items such as the ones on sale at the "Real 0%" Madness.

GE Appliances
GE Appliances

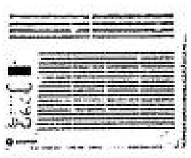
With the ongoing Frequent User Privileges, cardholders can charge their purchases to their BPI credit card and claim a prize for as low as 1,600 points. They have a choice from a wide selection of fabulous prizes. Every P25 purchase is equal to one point. This promo runs until December 2006.

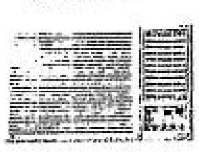
MAPAPAMURA KA SA LAMIG!

The GE SmartAir Series Airconditioners. *With best in class **EER of 11**, get airconditioning for as little as **3 centavos a minute** energy consumption.



AJV05KA P7,995.00


AJE07KA P11,995.00
with remote control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AJE12KA P15,295.00
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With the best Energy Efficiency Rating in its class, the GE SmartAir Series Airconditioners at 0.65 hp, is designed to give you superb performance and even cooler savings. Now available at a very affordable P7,995, and with models that come with a free remote control, it's never been easier to stay cool this summer. So huwag matakot magpalamig. Mag GE airconditioner na.

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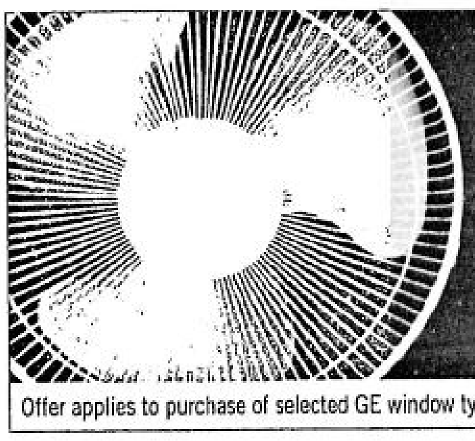


FANTASTIC!

Get a free stand fan worth P1,495.00 from GE with every purchase of selected GE appliances. Promo valid until April 30 only.

Offer applies to purchase of selected GE window type airconditioners, single-door refs, 2-direct cool refs, asian topmount refs, stainless topmount and bottom mount refs and chest freezers. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1178 Series of 2004.

Shopping made *easy*

FOR shoppers, it's all about convenience. It is all about seeing (and eventually shopping for) all the brands and their latest models under one roof. For BPI credit cardholders, they have the best advantage in the world as BPI Credit Cards hold another exciting Installment Madness at the Glorietta, Ayala Center, Makati City from March 10 to 28.

The latest Madness, dubbed "Real 0%", promises to be a shopping event. It offers BPI credit cardholders fabulous perks that they can't find anywhere else. They can avail of more products at zero percent interest deals for all appliances, an instant prize for a minimum purchase of P3,000, additional 10 Frequent User points for ever P1,000 purchase which will be reflected on the next billing statement. Plus, a chance to be one of the 10 lucky winners in the weekly and grand raffle draws.

BPI credit cardholders using any of the fully-charged-for-value BPI Credit Cards (BPI Express Credit/BPI Classic/Gold/Petron/Edge MasterCard) will delight in finding the hottest appliances in town, as brought to them by General Electric, Whirlpool, Sharp, LG Collins, Akira, White Westinghouse, Hyundai, Panasonic, Pioneer, Fedders, JVC, Philips and Promac.

Computer enthusiasts will find great deals from Electroworld, Silicon Valley, The Computer Authority, Villman, Compex and Intel Micro Electronics.

Furniture hunters can shop for stuff from Ambiance One, Home Options, Blims and Home Plus.

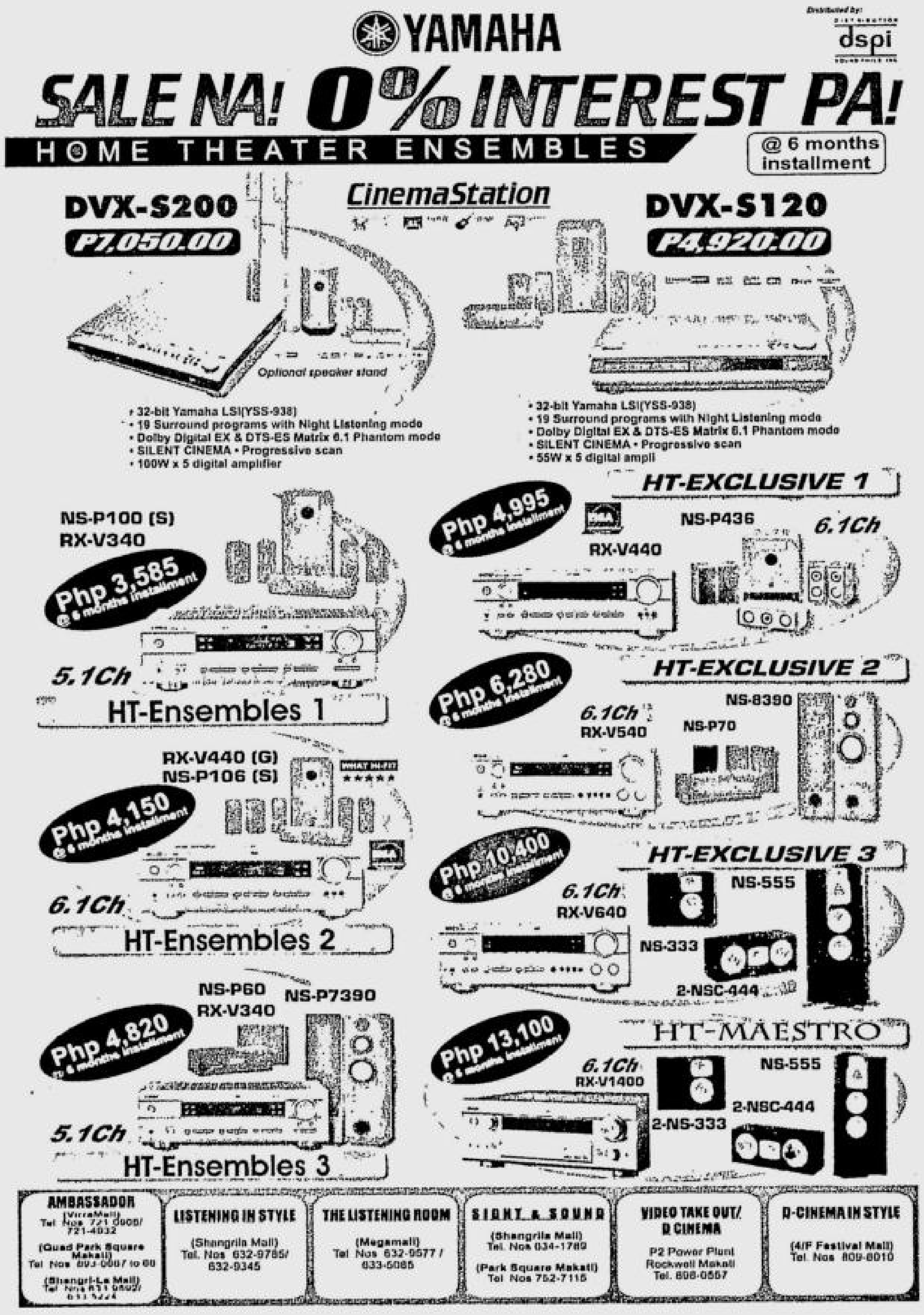
Other participants are Tefal, Casio, Canon/Kodak, Naomi Jewelry, Semicon, Globe, Sportshouse, DSPI-Yamaha, Ambassador Home Electronics, Collins International and 5th Avenue.

The participating dealers are Abenson, Ambassador Appliance, Anson's Emporium, Automatic Center, Sogo Appliance, SM (Star) Appliance, Waltermart, Western Marketing and J & R Appliance (store-level).

Only the BPI Credit Card carries two credit lines in one card: the regular line and the SIP (Special Installment Plan). The regular line is for purchases made at the grocery, drugstore, gas station, boutique and the like. The SIP line is for purchasing high-ticket items, such as appliances, and is best enjoyed during an Installment Madness.

"Real 0%" is the 10th anniversary offering of BPI Credit Cards' Installment Madness. It is the 32nd Madness, the first of which began in 1994, a trailblazing venture of BPI Credit Cards in the credit card industry.

Apply Here for your
BPI Credit Card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• 32-bit Yamaha LSI(YSS-938)
• 19 Surround programs with Night Listening mode
• Dolby Digital EX & DTS-ES Matrix 6.1 Phantom mode
• SILENT CINEMA • Progressive scan
• 55W x 5 digital ampli
NS-P100 (S)
RX-V340
Php 3,585 @ 6 months installment
5.1Ch
HT-Ensembles 1
HT-EXCLUSIVE 1
Php 4,995 @ 6 months installment
NS-P436
6.1Ch
RX-V440
HT-EXCLUSIVE 2
Php 6,280 @ 6 months installment
6.1Ch
RX-V540
NS-P70
NS-8390
RX-V440 (G)
NS-P106 (S)
WHAT HI-FI ★★★★★
Php 4,150 @ 6 months installment
6.1Ch
HT-Ensembles 2
HT-EXCLUSIVE 3
Php 10,400 @ 6 months installment
6.1Ch
RX-V640
NS-555
NS-333
2-NSC-444
NS-P60
RX-V340
NS-P7390
Php 4,820 @ 6 months installment
5.1Ch
HT-Ensembles 3
HT-MAESTRO
Php 13,100 @ 6 months installment
6.1Ch
RX-V1400
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2-NS-333
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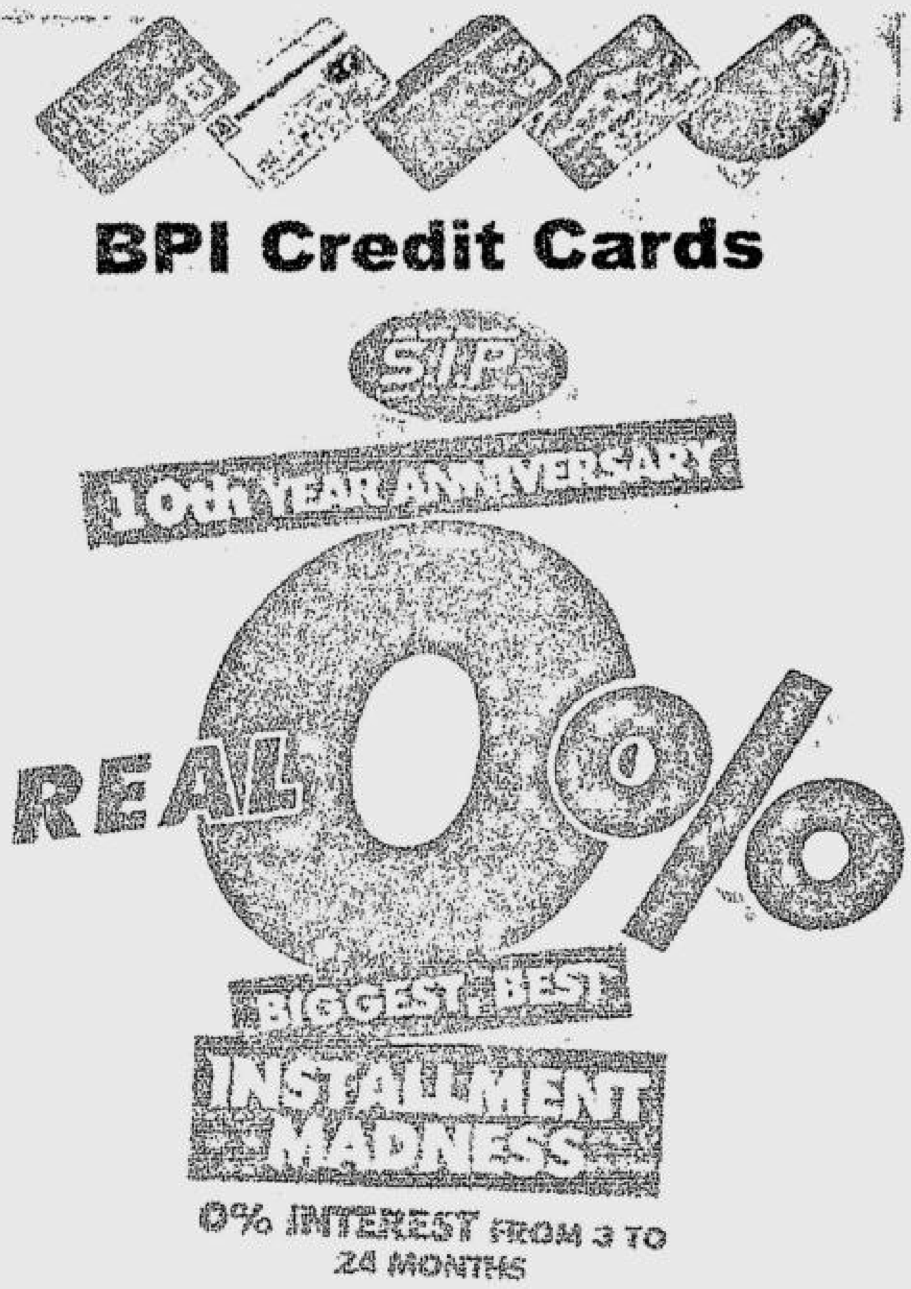
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SIP
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REAL 0%
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0% INTEREST FROM 3 TO 24 MONTHS

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YAMAHA'S involvement with sound began with the production of our first reed organ in 1887. Shortly thereafter, we began making pianos and other instruments, and today we are the world's largest producer of musical instruments. We also operate a worldwide music school, design concert halls and produce innovative electronic instruments. Our audio components have long been recognized as the standard bearers of fine quality, and with the development of Digital Sound Field Processing in 1986, we opened a new era in home entertainment. All of our acoustics and audio expertise is now engineered into LSIs that we design and manufacture ourselves, and these powerful chips are expanding and enhancing entertainment possibilities in the exciting new field of home theater. Recently, we've also introduced state-of-the-art video components, and now offer everything necessary for the finest in music and movie enjoyment at home.

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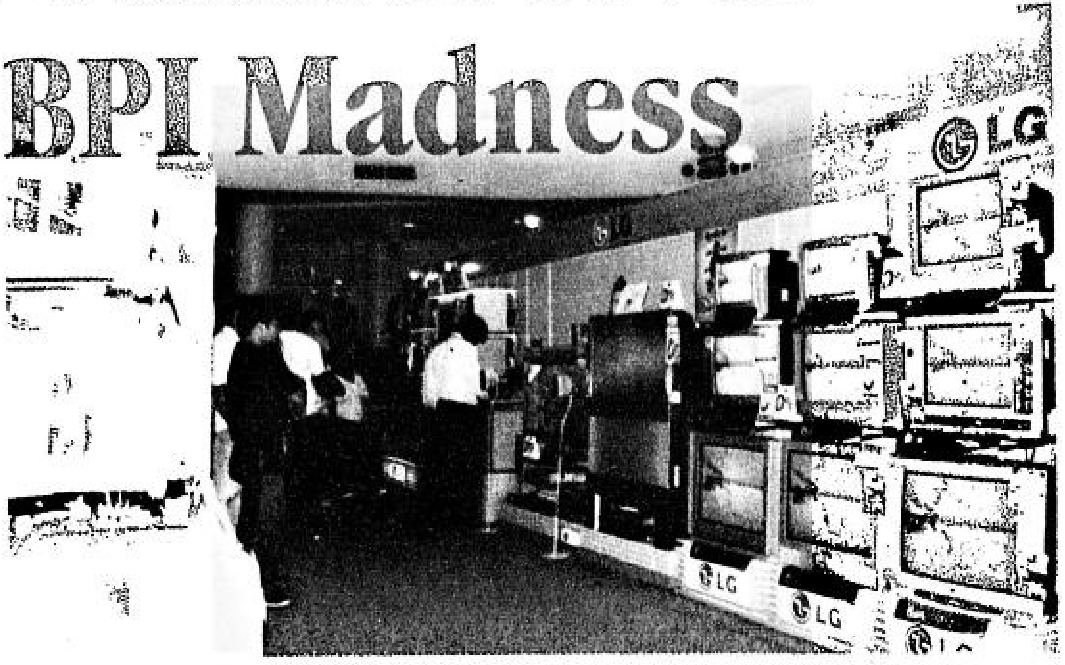
Yamaha has been one of the most popular an innovative manufacturers of home audio components for more than three decades. In recent years we have helped to create the new category of home theater entertainment, and now offer a wide range of products for every budget and preference. Our top-of-the-line components are the most sophisticated in the world, and much of the same technology goes into out compact and affordable systems, What's more, our commitment to high quality home theater is not limited to sound; we have also introduced a high performance video projector designed to maximize the image quality of movies. For the finest in music and movie enjoyment at home, make your system a Yamaha.

For more information about audio/video equipment or want to see the latest innovative home entertainment visit the LISTENING IN STYLE at 5th level Shangri-La Plaza Mall, EDSA cor. Shaw Blvd. Tel.: 632.97.85 o 632.93.45 or visit us at www.avcorner.com

> Yamaha has been one of the most popular an innovative manufacturers of home audio components for more than three decades

Summer reaches fever pitch in BPI Madness



THE ANNUAL summer shopping spree is back. Its that period of the year when the time for leisure is in our hands. Its also time to whip out your family's checklist: your wife's gas range, your son's DVD player, your daughter's aircon and your very own personal ref.

Good thing you're a BPI credit cardholder. You can go to BPI Credit Cards 32nd Installment Madness dubbed "Real 0%" at the Glorietta, Ayala Center, Makati City from March 10 to 28.

Now that BPI Credit Cards is celebrating a decade of Installment Madness (a trailblazer in its time back in 1994), BPI credit cardholders can look forward to the best deals ever, including the zero percent interest promo on high-ticket items by participating merchants, among others.

The "Real 0%" Installment Madness is a haven for value-conscious BPI credit cardholders using their BPI Express Credit, BPI Classic/Gold/Petron/Edge MasterCard. They can take advantage of Madness treats such as an instant gift for a minimum of P3,000, additional 10 Frequent User Privilege points, for every P1,000 purchase at the Glorietta Activity Center, and a chance to be one of the 10 lucky winners in the weekly, Midnight Madness and Grand Raffle draws.

Choose among these participating brands for your summer shopping spree: General Electric, Whirlpool, Sharp, LG Collins, Akira, White Westinghouse, Hyundai Electronics, Ariston, Amercian Home, CCAC & CASC, Sony, Aiwa, Kolin, Panasonic, Pioneer, Fedders, JVC, Philips and Promac.

Computer needs are fully met with great deals from Electroworld, Silicon Valley, The Computer Authority, Villman, Compex, and Intel Micro Electronics.

Furniture and home furnishing shoppers can choose from Ambiance One, Home Options, Blims and Home Plus.

Other participants are Tefal, Casio, Canon/Kodak, Naomi Jewelry, Semicon, Globe, Sportshouse, DSPI-Yamaha, Ambassador Home Electronics, Collins International and 5th Avenue.

The participating dealers are Abenson, Ambassador Appliance, Anson's Emporium, Automatic Center, Sogo Appliance, SM (Star) Appliance, Waltermart, Western Marketing and J & R Appliance (store-level).

Indeed, beat the heat and enjoy the cool deals on offer at the "Real 0%" Installment Madness.

> Choose among these participating brands for your summer shopping spree: General Electric, Whirlpool, Sharp, LG Collins, Akira, White Westinghouse, Hyundai Electronics, Ariston, Amercian Home, CCAC & CASC, Sony, Aiwa, Kolin, Panasonic, Pioneer, Fedders, JVC, Philips and Promac.

BPI Credit Cards
S.I.P.
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REAL 0%
BIGGEST, BEST
INSTALLMENT MADNESS
0% INTEREST FROM 3 TO 24 MONTHS

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Cold Fact 1:
LG is No.1 globally for 4 consecutive years. (Source: Japan Airconditioning, Heating and Refrigeration News)

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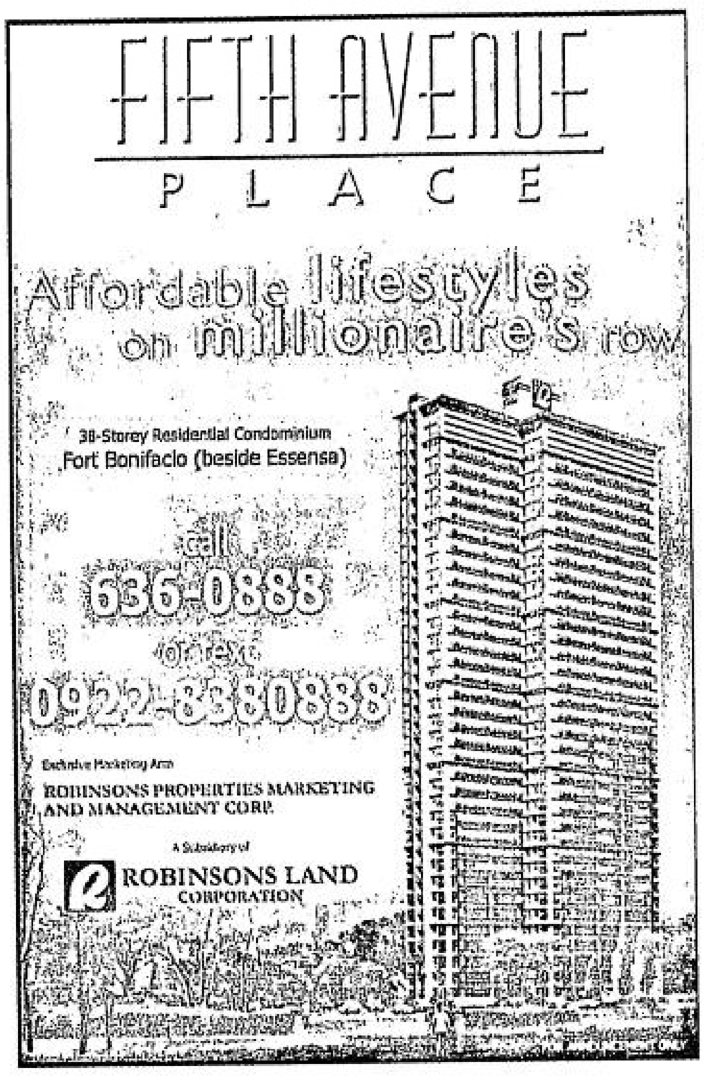

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Wanted: 'Bridging' leaders

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

THE WORD collaboration is becoming noticeably absent from today's vocabulary.

This is because human nature dictates that one should only work with those with similar views. Those with differing opinions or the "enemies" are kept on the other side.

Rarely, if ever, do the two sides meet.

Unfortunately, this has led to broad and often insurmountable divisions within the business sector and society as a whole, preventing the country from taking a significant step forward.

What are needed are leaders who will break out of their comfort zone and extend a hand of cooperation to bring those from the other side to the discussion table.

Lasting solutions are often arrived at only when two sides in conflict sit down and work toward a common objective. No solution can come from one sector alone.

These ideal leaders come few and far between but the Asian Institute of Management, through the AIM-Mirant Center for Bridging Societal Divides, is bent on increasing their number.

Mirant chief executive Edgardo A. Bautista said Mirant threw its support behind the program because of the urgency of the problem.

"It is correct to develop a new kind of leadership to solve the inequalities and structural weaknesses that give rise to conflicts. The traditional type of leaders, schooled in the theory and models of the west and urban centers, have not been so effective in the hinterlands and among the poor," Bautista said.

"We must grow a new type of leader—one who has the bridging qualities and the harmonizing skills that we need. To do this, we must understand better how to discover that kind of leader, how to nurture him and replicate his kind," he added.

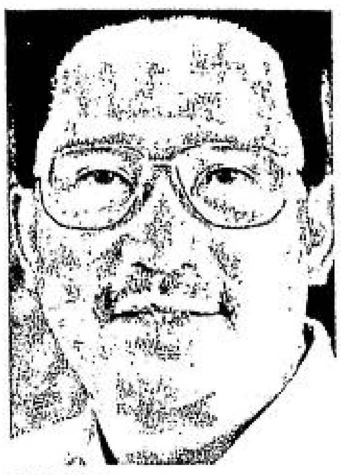
The Center was formally launched last month and is reputedly the first institution of its kind in the world.

Ernesto D. Garilao, executive director of the Center, tells the INQUIRER in an interview that Philippine society is riddled with vast gaps because of the long history of solving things by working only with those within the same circle.

In the corporate world, for instance, there is a history of mistrust between communities and companies because corporations have typically worked on their own and just entered a community without consulting the local leaders.

There is that mentality that the community's consent could always be bought.

"But communities are changing. They can assert their interests and work on their own issues. That is why we see a lot of conflict in communities," Garilao says.



GARILAO

But by developing a breed of leaders who would be able to bridge the gaps, divisions would hopefully be narrowed.

Influential business leaders who are "bridging" leaders at the same time would then be able to minimize conflict in the workplace and in the community by working together with the community leaders where their operations are housed, their employees and their consumers.

"What we want to develop is a new type of leader who would be able to not only consider his interests but the interests of others as well. This is needed now because people are sick and tired of divisiveness. There is a need to flow into a new kind of thinking where collaboration is key," Garilao says.

Bridging leaders are described as those with the ability to listen, to put themselves in others' shoes, have credibility with their constituents, are open to reaching out to other constituents, transparent, self-aware and humble.

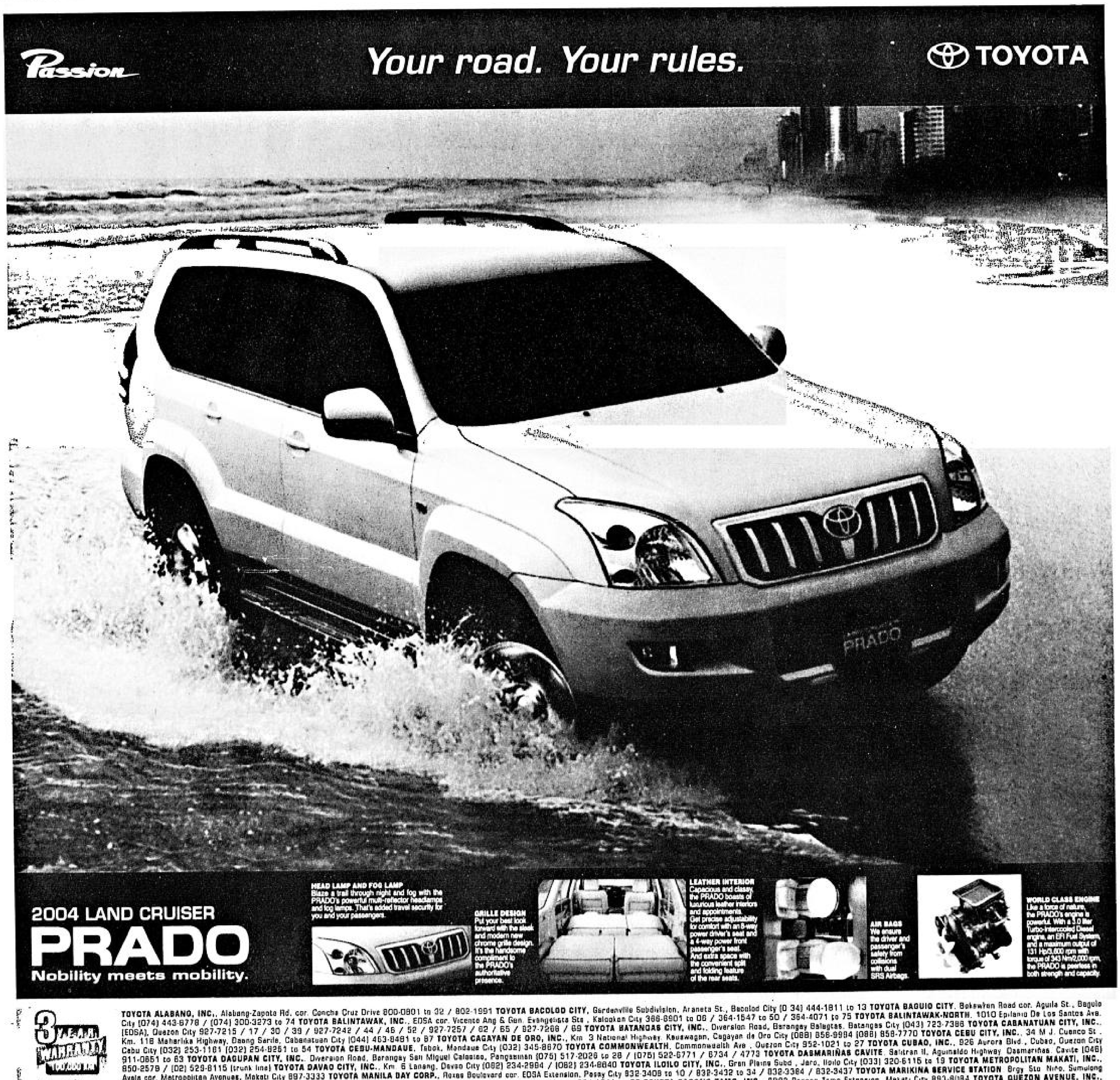
It may seem that no leader could possibly possess these qualities but Peggy Dulany, founder of Synergos Institute that is renowned worldwide for its work in developing bridging leaders, says that they have always existed, but have not been previously recognized and studied to provide an example for others.

The AIM-Mirant Center, thus, has put together a program to study these bridging leaders and how they have made a difference in their societies. The program was developed with the help of Synergos Institute.

The experiences of these bridging leaders would then be shared with the public to help them develop their own leadership skills. Initially, the center will focus on addressing divides and leadership issues in Mindanao but the program is open to all.

The ultimate goal, says AIM president Roberto F. de Ocampo, is to develop that spirit of trusting and collaborative relationships among diverse sectors and societal divides.

It is admittedly ambitious but the AIM-Mirant Center is hopeful that it could be done, for the sake of the marginalized sectors in the Philippines and the rest of Asia.



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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Louie C. Camino

INA as seen in the book

Uproar over underage nude starlet in coffee table book

INA CABANGTURA: 17-year-old wannabe bold star doesn't care about the gossip in her neighborhood. "The neighbors won't make money talking about me," she says.

AURA: Wants more money

By Nini Valera

UNTIL last week, Ina Tabangcura, 17, lived a relatively obscure life in Barangay Nayong Kanluran on West Avenue in Quezon City.

This obscurity was turned into notoriety when pictures of a naked Ina, published in a coffee table book called Stars and Well Known Models-Nude Photography Art, were splashed in tabloids and shown on television news programs last week to promote the book, which is now being sold here.

Community leaders are clamoring for the Department of Welfare and Social Services to intervene and stop Ina and her parents from furthering the girl's career as a nude model, and lately as a bold actress.

The book, which is being distributed privately through cell phone orders, also features pictures of nude bold starlets Stella L., Aura Luna, Kat de Santos and Rose Valencia. The pictures were taken in Philippine beauty spots last year by Hong Kong photographers Ho Yim Mo and Xiong Guang Ming.

Like Ina, Aura Luna's life was disrupted by the coffee table book.

Thrown out of home

Aura, 21, a bold starlet, told INQUIRER Entertainment that her mother had thrown her out of their house when she learned about the book.

"Yes, I agreed to have my pictures taken," she said. "But I did not know that they would be selling the book here."

Her only consolation, Aura said, is that her boyfriend is still standing by her. She and her manager are waiting for legal advice if they can stop the sale of the book here.

"If not, I should be paid more money," Aura said.

In the book, Ina was identified as Ynah Cabrera, "an international professional model graduated from the Performance Department of the University of the Philippines." It said Ynah had won second or third prize in the Philippine Model Performance Contest in 1999 and 2002.

But the closest that Ina had gotten to winning any title was in the noontime show "Eat Bulaga," where she was one of the finalists in the program's recycled beauty contest last year. Ina has also been a constant contestant in provincial beauty contests, bringing home various sashes as runner up.

In the last barangay elections in 2001, Ina had run as Sangguniang Kabataan chair. She lost by a landslide.

"Trip *lang*" was how Ina described her candidacy as SK chair. "I wasn't serious. I did it for fun," she told INQUIRER Entertainment in an interview last Tuesday.

But the leaders in her community in Barangay Kanluran had taken Ina seriously.

Dismay

Rey Mendoza, former secretary of the barangay council, expressed dismay at how the youth of the community where he grew up is being guided by their elders. He said Ina's late grandfather, Vicente Cabrera, had been barangay chair of the community.

"He was a highly principled man," said Mendoza, shaking his head. "He would not have allowed this to happen," he added, referring to Ina's nude modeling career.

When shown the book with Ina's naked pictures, her mother, Lorna, shook her head and almost burst into tears.

She told INQUIRER Entertainment that she had not been aware her daughter had posed nude for photographs.

When told that Ina was supposedly paid P50,000 for a two-day shoot, Lorna claimed she had not seen any of the money.

"*Saan kaya n'ya dinala ang pera? Sana, nakabili na kami ng mga gamit sa bahay* (On what could she have spent the money? We should have bought things for the house)," she said wistfully.

But Ina had other ideas about spending the money, which she said was not P50,000, but was still a substantial amount.

"I bought stuff for myself—clothes, shoes, everything I needed," she admitted. "My parents did not wonder how I was able to afford lots of things. I just told them that I bought them from a friend who had just come back from Hong Kong. No, I don't feel guilty about not giving them any money. I give them money when I can."

She should be in school, INQUIRER Entertainment pointed out. But the strong-willed Ina replied: "I enrolled at the Far Eastern University in the beginning of the school

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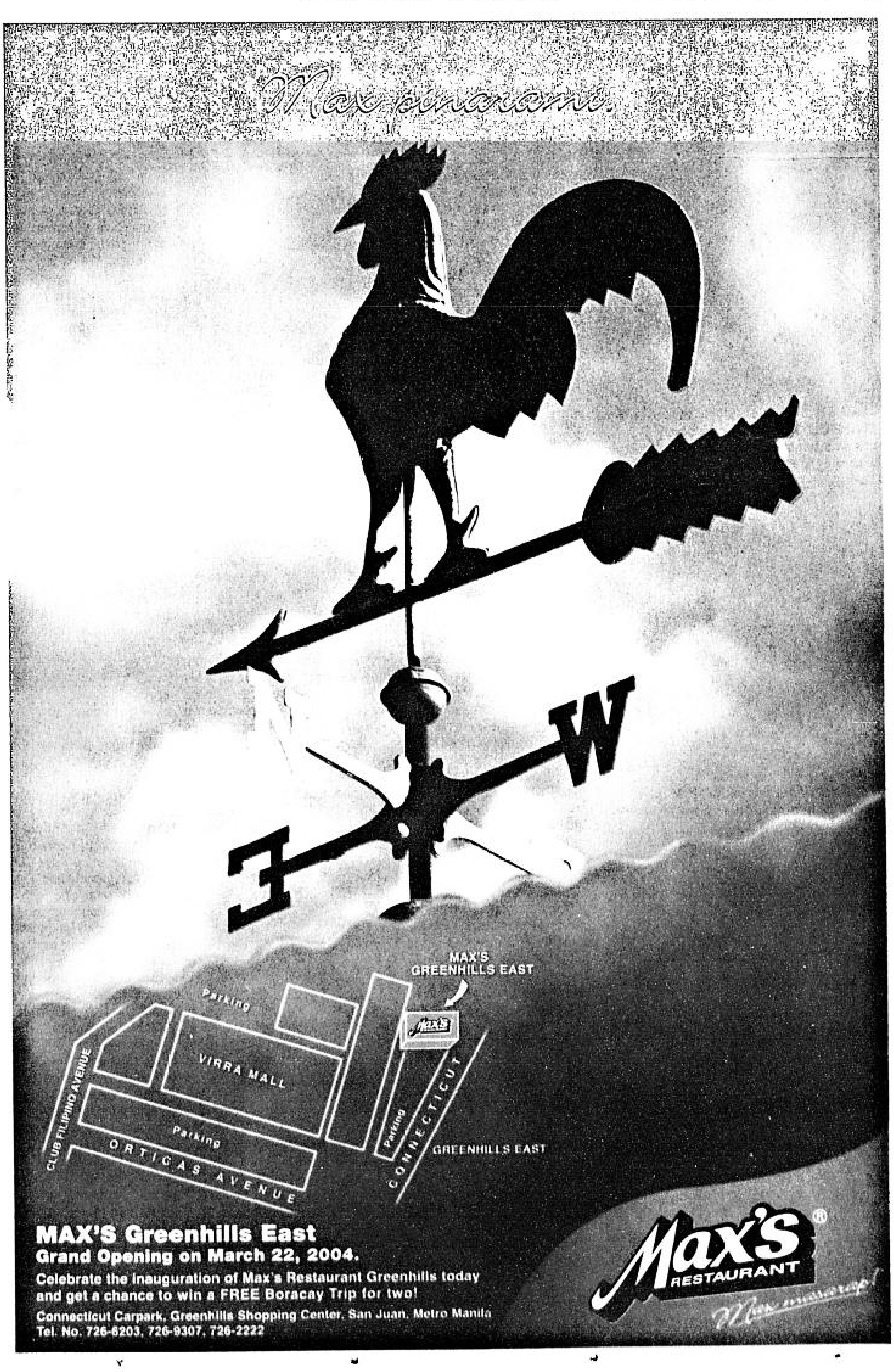

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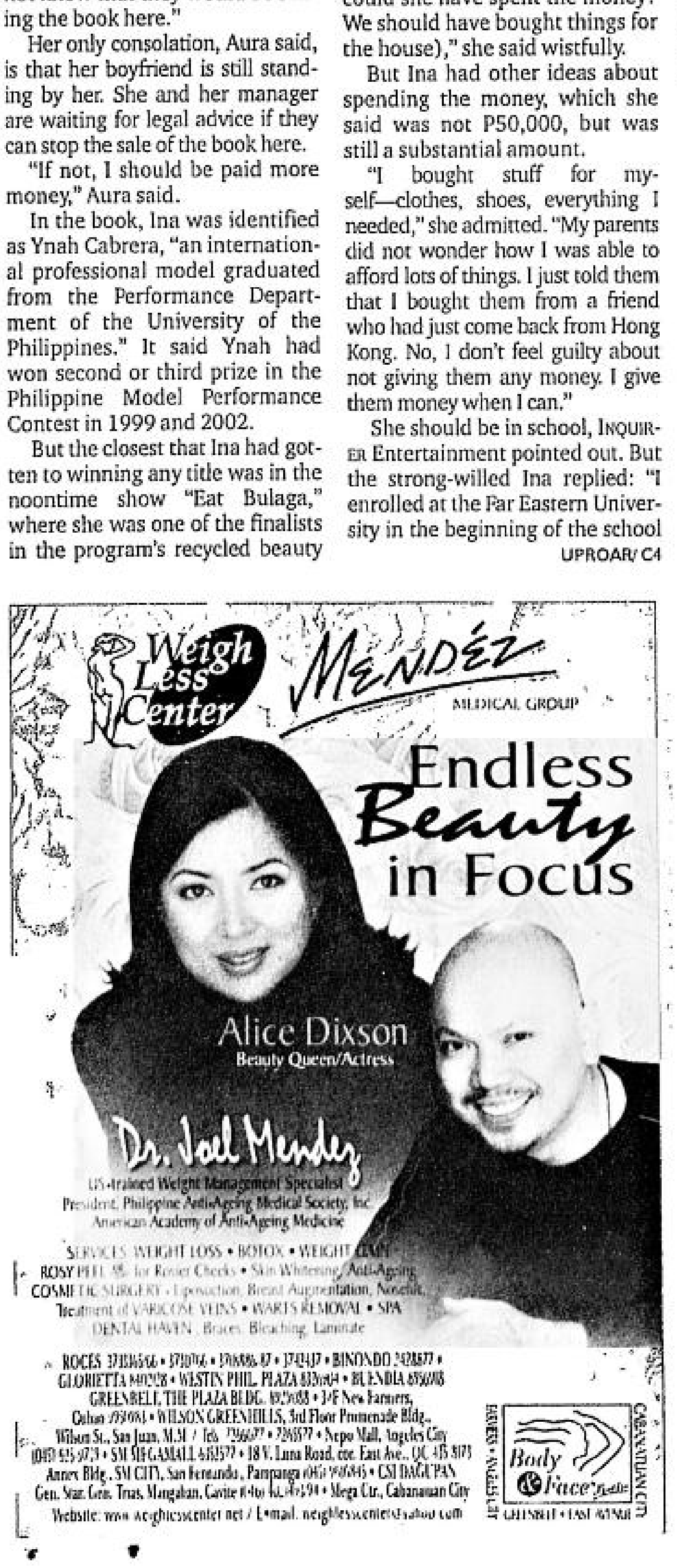

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Pia's pictures of happy memories

FEELING rock star: A belt that started as a buckle while Pia was still in college remains a fond memory of school

SWIMSUIT: Worn just last summer, this swimsuit from Roxy girl is very flattering, according to Pia.

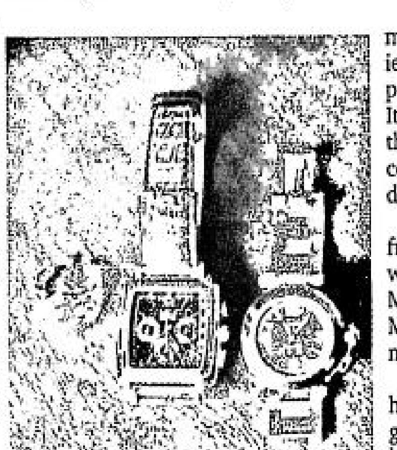
OVER-SIZED pockets in this khaki skirt makes the item one of Pia's favorites.

JEANS that fits right in all places no matter what the state of Pia's fitness is.

By Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

I HAVE been everywhere with my boyfriend. I travel with him a lot. That's why if I break up with him, I'm going to have to get rid of so many pictures."

That was television host and commercial model Pia Guanio talking about the numerous pictures she has accumulated that are happy memories of her travels with her boyfriend of four years, Mike Jacob, younger brother of former swimmer and TV host Christine Jacob.



Pia said she and Mike would go on vacation twice a year—at Christmastime and during Holy Week. Wherever they went, Pia made sure she brought home a little something that would remind her of their visit, even if that souvenir was only a picture of herself and Mike with a famous landmark as backdrop.

There are pictures taken in New York, New Zealand, Singapore and all the other places that Pia has been to. She points at them as she ushers in INQUIRER Entertainment into her condominium unit in Ortigas, Pasig City. If her busy schedule would permit, Pia would love to visit different parts of Europe in their next vacation, she said.

OUT OF THE CLOSET

As one of the hosts of the longest-running daily television noontime show "Eat Bulaga" on GMA 7, and as one of the anchors of "24 Oras," the newly reformatted news program of Mel Tiangco and Mike Enriquez, Pia has hardly any time left for traveling. On Saturdays, Pia shares hosting chores with Paolo Bediones in the quiz show "LG Digital Challenge" also on GMA 7.

But Pia has managed to fill her home with mementos of her travels, including artworks from Hanoi in Vietnam. She also has antique drawers, cabinets, chairs and a four-poster bed from her mother's ancestral home in Makati.

She had her window shutters designed "because I wanted something that would give me total darkness whenever I wanted. It's so calming. The sun comes through the shutters and casts that amber tone throughout the room."

Pia hired interior designer Ronnie Pugay to "fix my clutter."

"Because my clutter is of different shapes, Ronnie placed baskets and shelves, and blinds to cover them," said the chinky-eyed beauty. "Would you believe that all this—wood, baskets, shelves and blinds cost only P5,000? He's *that* good."

Pia gave INQUIRER Entertainment a peek into her baskets, shelves, drawers and cabinets. Here's what's inside:

Stuffed toys. "The stuffed toys have meanings to them, like cute seal from New Zealand. Every time we go somewhere we buy some stupid things. When I travel its mostly to just go sight-seeing."

Art works. "I got some from Bangkok and Hanoi. They have fantastic artworks there. We wanted to go to a place in Asia that had European flavor. Hanoi is quite untouched up to now. There are a lot of French colonial buildings still standing there."

Bags. "I really love this furry bag. I know it looks mossy now. I don't know the material —wool, I believe. I love it because I can put all my stuff in it without having to think. I hate a bag that makes you think about what you can and cannot put in it because I want to bring everything with me."

Jewelry. "I have a weird-looking (ring). *Parang bolang kristal* (It's like a crystal ball). But it's a ring. I think it's a Murano. It was given to me by a friend."

Watches. "I don't really like jewelry but I spend for watches. I have a Cartier, which my boyfriend gave me."

"My dad gave me a G-mix watch. Everybody loves it, no matter who or what, girl or boy. They seem to like this watch a lot."

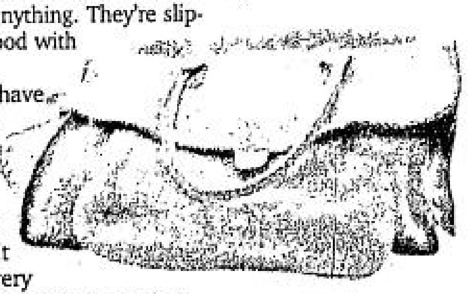
Sleepwear. "I'm proud of my black Calvin Klein nightie because my boyfriend picked it for me on his own. It's the first frilly sleepwear that I own. They say this could pass for a cocktail dress."

Jackets. "I wear a jacket from Wink whenever I want to be Sporty Spice. My other favorite is from Mango. It's a bit more formal than the Wink jacket."

Shoes. "I'm a size 8. I have big feet. I've actually given away a lot of shoes. I love shoes. I've actually used one corner in the kitchen as a place for my shoes. Funny, instead of food, I (store) shoes (in the kitchen). Whenever I have friends who would leave for the States, I send money and tell them to buy me shoes. I don't care what kind. It's so corny, but it's true.

"I have a pair of sandals from Gucci. It's one of my favorites. This is a bit tricky. You have to tie them around your ankle. It looks so nice."

"I have a pair of rubber shoes that is so comfortable. I have another one that is also very easy to pair with anything. They're slip-ons so they look good with skirts, too."



Halter tops. "I have a top that looks like a scarf but is actually a blouse, a hankie blouse. You tie it around your back. I like it because it looks very glamorous, even if you just match it with a pair of jeans. It looks different. At least, you're not just wearing that teenie-weenie black dress.

"I also like this tube top. It's very girly. It has a string that you could tie around your shoulder."

Jeans. "I have lots of pairs! But I'm into Capri pants right now. I like them because they are both fashionable and comfy. I usually wear one with a nice shirt and rubber shoes, but when I want to look sexy, I match it with a tank top and heels. I like that J Lo. look."

"I also like a pair of blue jeans from Freeway because it fits in all the right places. It's very nice, no matter what state of fitness I am in. I also recently discovered that Jag is very good in terms of the fit."

Skirts. "I super like denim skirts, especially the one I bought in Australia in 2001. I like the shape and color, and it's the best one I've got."

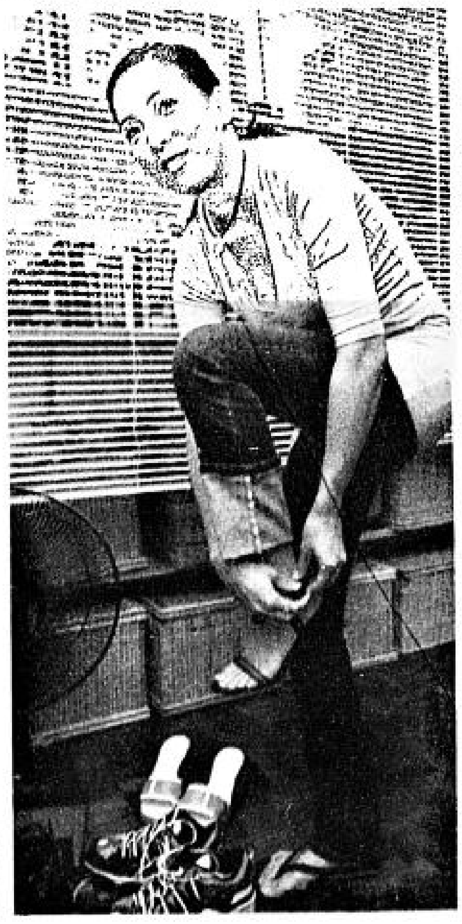
"I also like a khaki skirt I have because it's sporty. It's different. The pockets are even longer than the skirt. It's from Top Shop."

Belts. "If we want something memorable, then we're talking about a belt that I've had since I was in college. I was a rock star in college. (Laughs) I just bought the buckle. I had to look far and wide to get the leather strap that would match it. A friend found it for me."

Swimwear. "The one from Roxy Girl is very flattering. I just wore it last summer."

CALVIN Klein nightie, bought by Pia's boyfriend Mike Jacob, can pass for a cocktail dress.

WOOL tote that is now moldy can fit everything that Pia dumps into it.



SLIP-ONS, flip-flops, strappy, sexy, high-heeled sandals and comfy rubber shoes for this shoe freak.

ORGANIZED clutter is the best way to describe Pia's room and closet, which are also filled with straw baskets for extra storage.

VIGGO MORTENSEN

Reluctant star, painter, poet, photographer, musician, humane human, ruggedly handsome

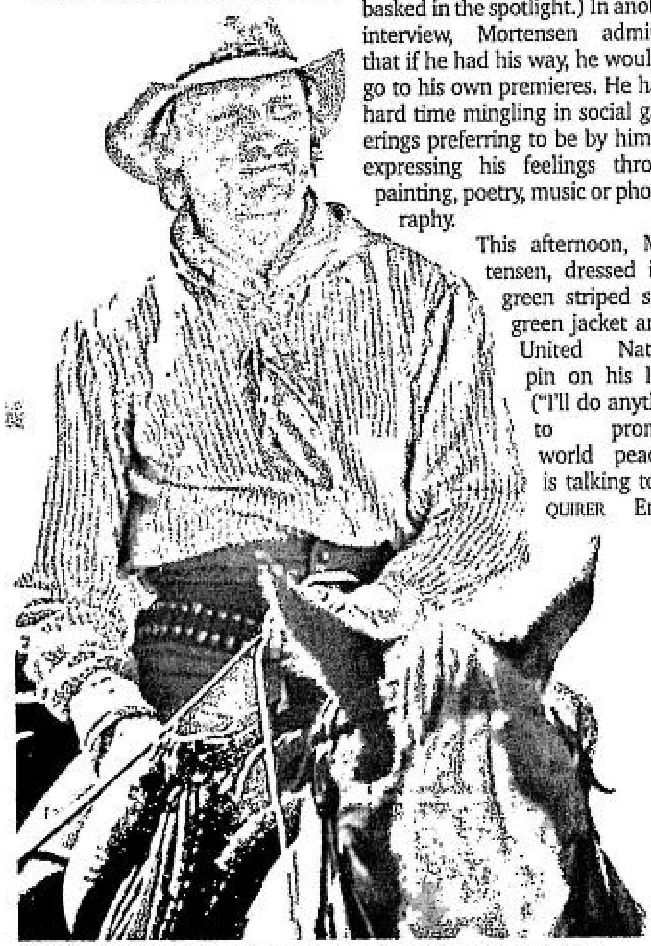
By Janet Susan R. Nepales
LA Correspondent

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

LOS ANGELES—Very few people know this: actor Viggo Mortensen, whose dignified and noble Aragorn in "Lord of the Rings" has sealed his hold on Hollywood, is a published poet and photographer, a painter who has exhibited his works, and a jazz musician who has several CD's to his credit.

The legendary Omar Sharif, Mortensen's co-star in the movie "Hidalgo," describes the actor as "too perfect, that's why I always say he must have some terrible defect somewhere hidden in himself."

Sharif continues. "He's an artist in every sense of the word. And he is very human and humane. He's very kind. He's kind to all people. He's always taking care of every member of the cast and crew in the film. He's always asking if you are all right, if you need anything, or if you want something."



MORTENSEN: Blond, blue-eyed, with a cleft chin that adds to his sexiness.

Genial, soft-spoken

Up close, the scar in Mortensen's upper lip is visible. So is the prominent cleft chin that adds to his appeal as one of Hollywood's sexiest men. In real life, the blonde, blue-eyed and ruggedly handsome Mortensen is genial and soft-spoken and very private.

He skipped the red carpet at the recent Oscars night "like the red plague." (His fellow cast members basked in the spotlight.) In another interview, Mortensen admitted that if he had his way, he wouldn't go to his own premieres. He has a hard time mingling in social gatherings preferring to be by himself, expressing his feelings through painting, poetry, music or photography.

This afternoon, Mortensen, dressed in a green striped shirt, green jacket and a United Nations pin on his lapel ("I'll do anything to promote world peace"), is talking to INQUIRER Entertainment about his new Disney action-adventure movie, "Hidalgo." He shows us a copy of "Miyelo," an impressive coffee table book of his photos, mostly taken during the filming of "Hidalgo," a CD of his photographs and a small book, "The Horse is Good," filled with black and white photos of the horses from the movie.

The film that inspired Mortensen to take these breathtaking pictures is set in 1890. It is based on the life of Frank T. Hopkins (Viggo), one of the greatest riders in the American west. Sharif plays the role of Sheik Riyadh in the movie that tells the travails of Hopkins and his reliable mustang Hidalgo as they compete in the 68-day endurance test and 3,000-mile "Ocean of Fire" race across the Arabian Desert.

In this horse race of the Bedouin, Viggo's character and Hidalgo try to survive the heat, the sandstorms and the locust clouds.

Film with horses

Mortensen fell so in love with TJ, the main horse playing Hidalgo in the movie, that he bought him. He also bought a few "Lord of the Rings" horses that he plans to bring to his ranch in Idaho.

The actor loves horse-riding so much that he requested more riding time in "LOTR" than what was originally in the script. He kept his onscreen horse nearby so that he could ride him during his breaks and strengthen his relationship with the animal.

"I have loved horses ever since I was a young kid," Mortensen says in a raspy voice. "I have a picture of my two younger brothers and I riding a horse in that coffee table book," he points out as he shows us the photograph. "I was 11 years old then. Right at that time, I hardly got to ride as much as I wanted to. It was only in 1990 that I began to ride again. So it is really great that I had to do a film with horses."

Director Johnston ("Jurassic Park III," "Jumanji," "October Sky") reveals, "Viggo took pictures everyday. When he was doing the big coffee table book, he borrowed a camera and he took all those photos in one day and put them together. I love those pictures."

Johnston reveals, "One of the more rewarding aspects of making the movie was working with Viggo. In many ways, he reminds me of a matinee idol of a bygone era, with the charm and quiet power of a Gary Cooper or Spencer Tracy, but with the vulnerable, mysterious qualities of early Brando or Montgomery Clift. Ultimately, he defies comparisons and is uniquely Viggo."

Collects stories

Born in New York to a Danish father and an American mother, Mortensen spent his childhood living in Manhattan and several years in Venezuela, Argentina and Denmark.

"I've been traveling a lot," he says, with understatement.

After more than three years in New Zealand for "LOTR," Mortensen was excited to do "Hidalgo" because the movie was filmed in various locations (Morocco, Montana, South Dakota, and California).

He collects stories during his travels, saying that every person has a story to tell.

"That's why when I'm in a taxi, I always talk to the cab driver, look at his name tag and ask him how he is. You understand them (drivers) better and you learn something from their stories."

Most dangerous scene

Preferring to do most of his stunts in the "Hidalgo," Mortensen discloses that "probably the most dangerous scene we did was the start of the race. We had a hundred stallions there which was dangerous because they were ready to attack each other.

"Luckily, my horse was quick enough. We were in the front row. Anyone who was past the second row couldn't see anything because of the sand. We only did the whole run a couple of times and one time, one of the horses did a somersault and hit one of the riders. The guy broke his neck and got a couple of braces. Five months later, he was back with us riding again."

Mortensen emphasizes that "when you ride horses, you fall, you get up and you get on again. When I was a kid, I wasn't scared at all. But now that I'm an adult, my body constantly reminds me that I'm not super human."

During the recent premiere of the movie at the El Capitan Theater, the actor rode TJ to the delight of his fans who were lined up on Hollywood Boulevard.

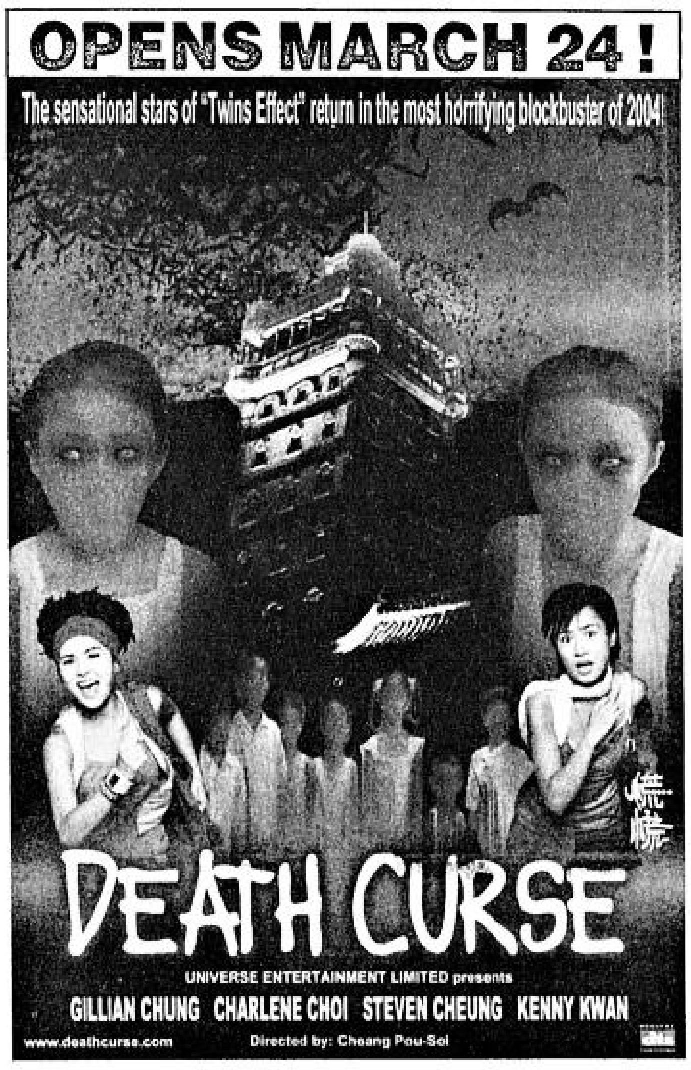
The former husband of singer Exene Cervenka, 48, from the punk rock group X, is himself a jazz musician, who has released three CDs. He has a 16-year-old son, Henry, with Cervanka who he divorced in 1997 after 10 years of marriage.

Life too short

His paintings and photos have been featured in galleries in New York, Los Angeles, Cuba and Denmark.

As a poet, he is currently working on his fourth book and is the co-founder of Perceval Press which publishes art and poetry books.

"Life is too short. There is so much to be done," says Mortensen. "Some people try to fantasize things that they have always wanted to do. I try to do them all in my lifetime."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Too hectic to be genuinely enjoyable

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

IN his latest starrer, "Cheaper By the Dozen," **Steve Martin** plays a small-town football coach who is offered a big, cushy job coaching a big-city college team. He's always wanted to make it to the big leagues of college football, so he accepts the offer with alacrity.

Unfortunately, his rash decision affects not just himself, but also his writer-wife (**Bonnie Hunt**)—and their 12 (count 'em) kids.

The children are sore about being compelled to leave the tiny town they have learned to love so well, and they hate their new urban neighborhood and school. They are treated like hicks and taunted beyond endurance, forcing them to get back at their tormentors and getting into a series of brawls.

To make things worse, their mom's book-writing career suddenly turns hot, and she has to go on a promotional tour for two weeks, leaving Dad, who already has his hands full with his coaching chores, all alone to take care of their big, rambunctious brood.

As expected, everything falls apart after Mom leaves, and both Martin's work and family life quickly deteriorate.

At first, Martin blames everything on his absent better half, but he eventually realizes that he's the culprit, because his vaulting ambition prompted him to practically force his children to uproot their young lives from their small-town comfort zone, to the stressful, cynical environment of the big city.

In the end, Martin is given the chance to make up for his mistakes, and all's well that ends well, especially since valuable lessons have been learned—not just by him, but by his wife and kids as well.

We appreciate the film's espousal of familial love and unity above all else, but we must observe that, to generate comical dynamism and zest, the production resorts to a staging and performances that's too hectic to be genuinely enjoyable to watch.

The kids are forever being made to run around the house, fall out off windows, get dirtied up, and scream and hit each other. Comedy requires a light touch to be natural, so this loud and livid approach is ultimately irritating and enervating.

Still, we liked some of the performances, especially Bonnie Hunt's cool portrayal of the mother of 12 who refuses to get swamped by her huge family's demands, and is determined to find time for her own interests.

We trust that her character's example isn't lost on other moms who have big families that require all their time. Something's gotta give, but it shouldn't be their all-important sense of self.

'Passion' opens March 31

MEL Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ" opens its Philippine run on March 31—in Metro Manila, Cebu, Laguna and Pampanga. Rated PG-13 by the MTRCB, the film carries a strong advisory: "Parents are strongly cautioned in bringing along kids below 10 years because of some scenes that might stress their sensibilities."

The movie graphically depicts the last 12 hours of the life of Jesus, from His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, Judas' betrayal, His torture, and His death on the cross.

'Taking Lives'

IN HIS latest starrer, "Taking Lives," **Olivier Martinez** ("Unfaithful") plays Montreal detective Joseph Paquette, who resents being assisted in a serial killer case by a female FBI profiler, Illeanna Scott (**Angelina Jolie**).

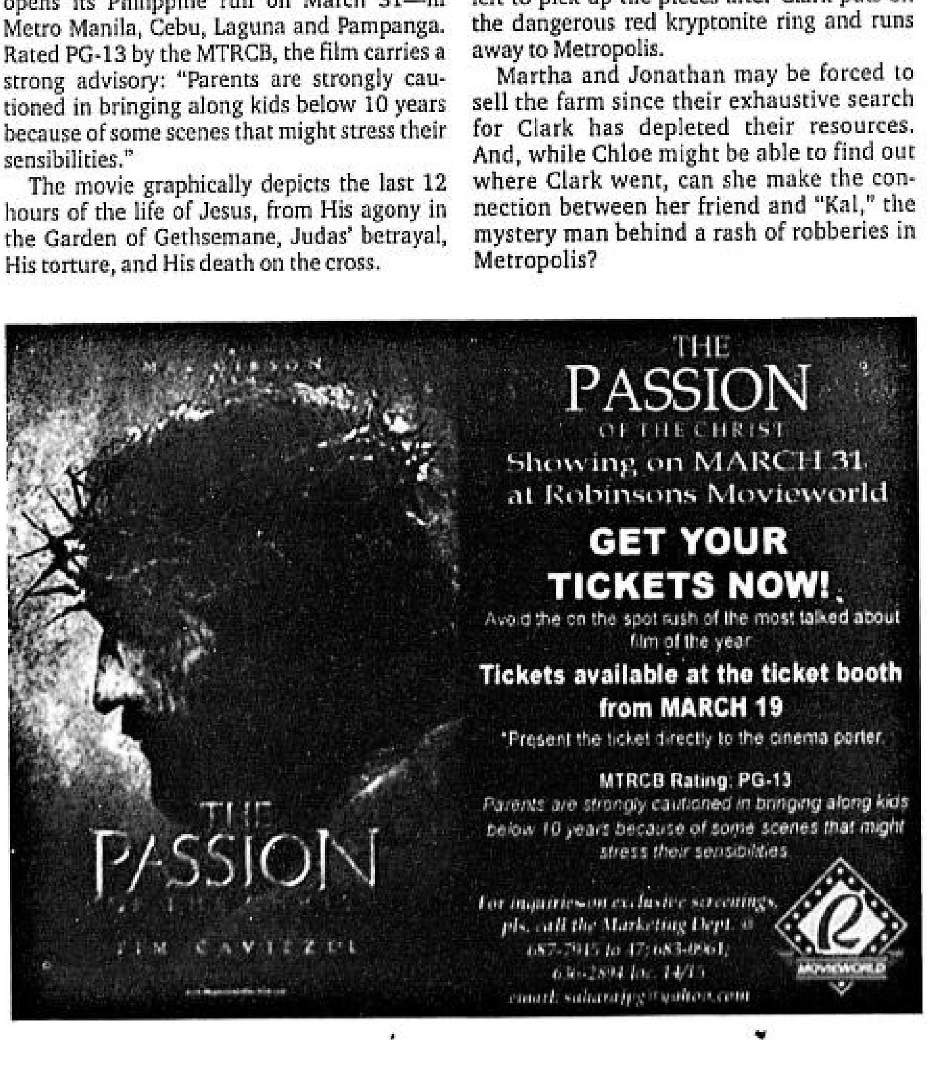
He gives her chilly reception because he finds her techniques theatrical and esoteric. He prefers the practical experience he's gathered from years of walking a beat and making arrests. To him, it's action, not theories, that gets the job done.

Meanwhile, as they bicker away, the cunning serial killer plots his next attack...

'Smallville'

THE THIRD season of "Smallville" (Studio 23, Tuesdays at 8 p.m.) starts airing on March 23. In the season opener, "Exile," Lana has been left to pick up the pieces after Clark puts on the dangerous red kryptonite ring and runs away to Metropolis.

Martha and Jonathan may be forced to sell the farm since their exhaustive search for Clark has depleted their resources. And, while Chloe might be able to find out where Clark went, can she make the connection between her friend and "Kal," the mystery man behind a rash of robberies in Metropolis?



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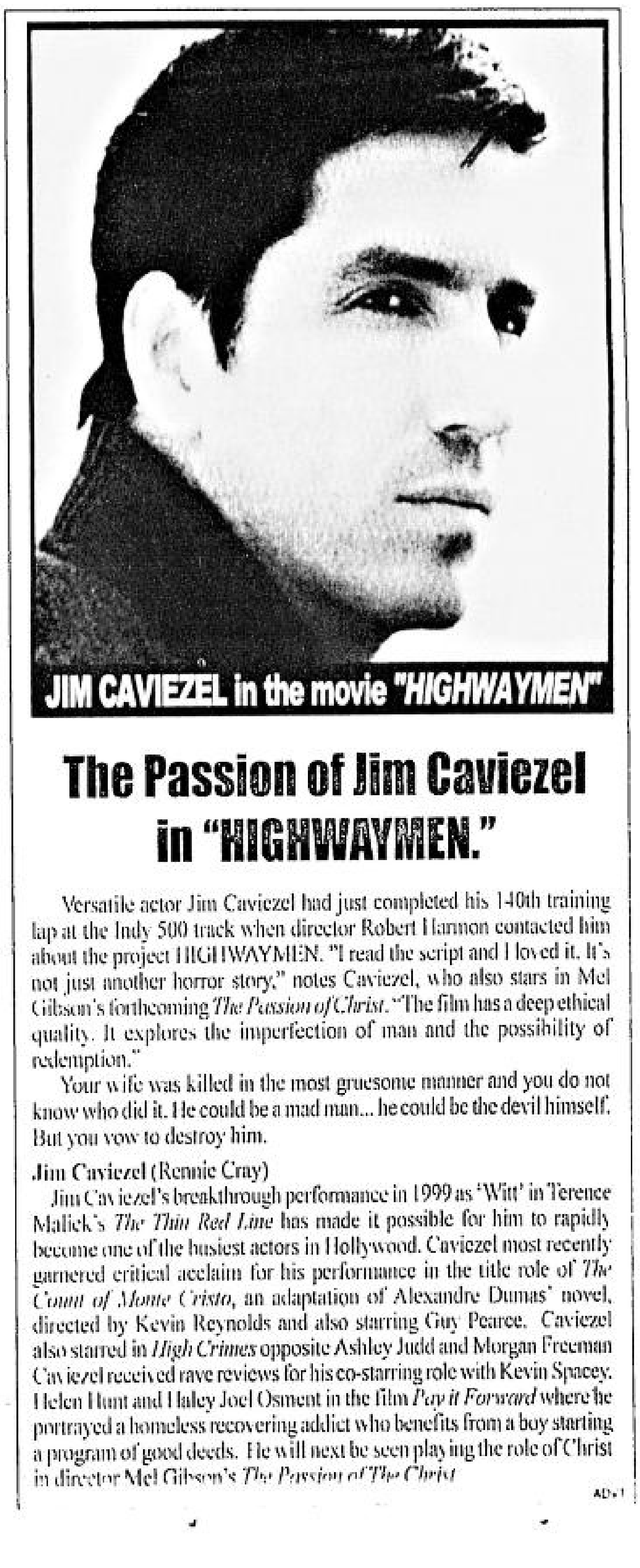
JIM CAVIEZEL in the movie "HIGHWAYMEN"

The Passion of Jim Caviezel in "HIGHWAYMEN."

Versatile actor Jim Caviezel had just completed his 140th training lap at the Indy 500 track when director Robert Harmon contacted him about the project HIGHWAYMEN. "I read the script and I loved it. It's not just another horror story," notes Caviezel, who also stars in Mel Gibson's forthcoming *The Passion of Christ*. "The film has a deep ethical quality. It explores the imperfection of man and the possibility of redemption."

Your wife was killed in the most gruesome manner and you do not know who did it. He could be a mad man... he could be the devil himself. But you vow to destroy him.

Jim Caviezel (Rennie Cray)

Jim Caviezel's breakthrough performance in 1999 as 'Witt' in Terence Malick's *The Thin Red Line* has made it possible for him to rapidly become one of the busiest actors in Hollywood. Caviezel most recently garnered critical acclaim for his performance in the title role of *The Count of Monte Cristo*, an adaptation of Alexandre Dumas' novel, directed by Kevin Reynolds and also starring Guy Pearce. Caviezel also starred in *High Crimes* opposite Ashley Judd and Morgan Freeman Caviezel received rave reviews for his co-starring role with Kevin Spacey, Helen Hunt and Haley Joel Osment in the film *Pay it Forward* where he portrayed a homeless recovering addict who benefits from a boy starting a program of good deeds. He will next be seen playing the role of Christ in director Mel Gibson's *The Passion of The Christ*

AD-1

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5. Only Goldilocks company-owned and franchise stores are authorized to release scratch cards. Third parties cannot re-sell or release any scratch card.

6. Prizes not claimed within sixty (60) days from notification date shall be forfeited with prior clearance from BFAD.

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TWO WAYS TO WIN:

PART 1: INSTANT PRIZE

1. ALL CARDS ARE WINNING CARDS! The customer can find out what his instant prize is by scratching the four slots on the scratch card. The scratch card will reveal three out of four slots with the same prize. The customer wins that prize.

2. In order to claim the instant prize, the bigger portion of the perforated scratch card should be surrendered to the cashier. The smaller portion of the scratch card serves as the SMS raffle entry and may be used to join the SMS portion. (Please refer to Part 2: "SMS portion").

3. Only winning scratch cards with authenticated security code will be honored. Tampered/altered scratch cards will be considered null and void.

4. All minor instant-win prizes (Goldilocks Fluffy Mamon, Coke Product, 10% Foodshop discount, Php5.00 off on selected products: 1 serving of Spaghetti, 1 serving of Lechon Paksiw, 1 serving of Pancit Malabon, 1 half roll, 1 pc. siopao, 1 loaf bread (750 gms.), 1 box polvoron), may be claimed at any Goldilocks store. All minor instant-win scratch cards are subject to prize verification code.

5. All major instant-win prizes (1 Million Pesos, Php10,000, Php5,000 and Cellphone prizes) should be claimed only at the Goldilocks Head Offices, with the ff. addresses:

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Goldilocks Bakeshop, Inc.
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The Marketing Dept.
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Mandaluyong City 1550

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All Fresh Food Products, Inc.
The Marketing Dept.
3/F Cotiaoking Bldg.
North Road Basak,
Mandaue City, Cebu

DAVAO:
Earth Grain, Inc.
The Marketing Dept.
Diversion Road,
Bo. Buhangin,
Davao City

6. All scratch cards that carry major prizes are subject to prize code verification from the Goldilocks Head Office.

7. A participant can win the 1 Million Grand Prize only once (either through instant-win or SMS). However, he may still join the promotion to win more minor prizes.

8. Redemption of products will be within sixty (60) days from the end of the promo.

PART 2: SMS PORTION

For another chance to win 1 Million Pesos, a grand electronic raffle draw is included in the promotion.

1. Scratch the silver panel with the SMS code.

2. Text: GOLDILOCKS <Code>/<Complete Name>/<Address>/<Age>

For example:
GOLDILOCKS ABC12345K/Juan Cruz/123 Paco St. Manila/25

Send to:
2600 for SMART, Addict Mobile & Talk 'n Text
2363 for Globe and Touch Mobile

3. The customers will then receive a reply text confirming their entry.

4. For succeeding entries, just text Goldilocks <SMS code> to the abovementioned SMS numbers.

For example:
Text "Goldilocks ABC123DKF" to 2363

5. Each SMS entry costs Php2.50.

6. Each SMS entry is qualified for the Grand E-Draw wherein Goldilocks will be giving away PhP 1Million.

7. Deadline for entries and draw dates are as follows:

INCLUSIVE DATES	DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES	E-RAFFLE DRAW
January 19 - March 31	March 31, 2004	April 1, 2004

8. The E-draw shall be held with the supervision of representatives from BFAD and Goldilocks Bakeshop, Inc.

9. There will be 1 winner of PhP 1 Million, tax-free.

10. The winner of the PhP 1 Million Grand Prize may claim the prize only at any Goldilocks Head Office.

HOW TO CLAIM THE MAJOR PRIZE:

1. Winners will have to present original and photocopy of at least two (2) valid identification cards (such as driver's license, SSS, TIN, school or company ID, birth certificate) and Cellphone SIM card.

2. Winners will be notified via registered mail and congratulatory ads in leading newspapers. Any travel expenses that may be incurred by winners in claiming their prize shall be to their account.

3. Prizes not claimed within sixty (60) days from notification shall be forfeited with prior clearance from BFAD.

4. Instant-Prize and e-draw winners authorize Goldilocks to disclose and publicize their names and other particulars as determined by Goldilocks in any mode or manner as Goldilocks deems appropriate.

5. The decision of Goldilocks Bakeshop, Inc. with the concurrence of BFAD is deemed final.

SMART touch Globe

Per DOH-BFAD Permit No. 0537 series of 2003

Another Booba role for Rufa Mae

SINCE she made a splash playing the sexy girl with big boobs in the Viva Films comedy "Booba," actress Rufa Mae Quinto has established a reputation as the foremost sexy comedienne in both TV and movies.

"I love the image," said Rufa Mae, "and I enjoy living up to it very much."

In her latest movie, Viva Films' "Masikip sa Dibdib," directed by Bb. Joyce Bernal and written by Mel Mendoza-del Rosario, Rufa Mae reprises her Booba character in Boobita Rose, the heroine in this bittersweet but heartwarming slice of life.

SHOW TIME

"It has a lesson at the same time," said Rufa Mae. She added that she could identify with the character in a lot of ways because she herself is family-oriented.

In "Masikip sa Dibdib," Rufa Mae's Boobita Rose is the breadwinner of a dysfunctional family. Her biggest dream is to help her mother recover from the trauma of having been abandoned by an irresponsible husband and to see her siblings through school. She is also longing to have her own family and live a simple but happy life with her own man and children.

Rufa Mae describes the role as "tough but fun." While the movie's title plays around her well-developed chest, Rufa Mae claims that she's proud of this asset.

"I'm proud of them," she says. "They're the first thing that people notice about me. But later on, people become aware that my talent is bigger than my chest. And I'm equally proud of this talent.

Playing Rufa Mae's hypochondriac and self-pitying mother in "Masikip sa Dibdib" is veteran actress Gina Pareño. The rest in the cast are John Lapus, Sunshine Dizon, Phytos Kyriaco, Bernard Bonnin, Swarding and Antonio Aquitania as the tricycle driver-boyfriend of Boobita.

RUFA MAE: Talent bigger than chest

Warner signs up talent search finalist

WHEN Christian Bautista signed up with Warner Music Philippines as a recording artist, the talent search contestant wanted to prove that he could do other stuff aside from Broadway songs.

SHOW STOPPER

This former choirboy who has appeared in numerous stage plays, the most notable of which are "Spolarium" and "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe," describes his debut album under his new record label as "something different than what people expect from me."

As a Warner Music Philippines artist, Christian joins the ranks of emerging pop stars Nina and Paolo Santos, two contemporary artists who have greatly influenced music trends and listening habits of music lovers.

His current single, "The Way You Look at Me," is now gaining major airplay and has attracted a growing following of female fans. When he's not busy preparing for his album launch, Christian keeps fit by rollerblading, swimming, playing table tennis, badminton, basketball, golf, paintball and football for the Ateneo Flag Football.

REYES: Real beauty is found within, says the beauty expert, who vows to fulfill his mission of making everyone feel beautiful for as long as he's in the beauty business.

Ricky Reyes' 'Ang Ganda ng 2004!'

MAVERICK beauty expert Ricky Reyes does not run out of surprises.

At the recent launch of his latest ad campaign "Ang Ganda ng 2004!" at the CCP Main Theater, Reyes once again paid tribute to women and beauty.

The show featured comedian Ruby Rodriguez, sexy actress Joyce Jimenez, soap actress Tanya Garcia, the ageless Pilita Corrales, the first ladies of several Metro Manila cities led by Marikina Mayor Marides Fernando, GMA 7 executive Wilma Galvante, Manila Standard editor in chief Jullie Yap-Daza, producer Lorraine Shuck, dancing queen and socialite Becky Garcia, businesswoman Nini Licaros, Dr. Vicky Belo, Chiqui Hollman, Cory Quirino, beauty queens Margie Moran Floirendo and Evangeline Pascual, teen actress Angel Locsin and Starstruck winner Yasmien Kurdi.

Designer Frederick Peralta's bridal fashion parade, which had Ruffa Gutierrez-Bektas in a black, Spanish-inspired wedding gown, as she was serenaded by Miss Saigon's David Shannen, was a major highlight of the show.

The unfading beauty of Gloria Romero, one of Reyes' signature models, was a regal presence in the show, that also featured Miss Saigon Ima Castro and Guapong Ricky Reyes image models Richard Gutierrez, Mark Herra, Albert Martinez and the Power Four.

Uproar over underage nude starlet...

From page C1

year. But I dropped out. *Tinamad ako* (I was lazy to continue)."

But Ina's mother had another take on her daughter's schooling.

"*Nagipit kami* (We run out of money)," she claimed.

Always short of money

Her family is always short of money, forcing the girl to join bikini opens (ramp modeling of two-piece swimsuits in nightclubs), according to Ina.

Her father works as a family driver to Quezon City councilor Wilma Amoranto-Sarino, while her mother is a housewife.

Ina said she had given her mother money several times.

"Once, I gave her P10,000 to pay for the electric bill that they couldn't pay," she recalled. "I bought my siblings the things and clothes they needed for school. I always give them money."

She does not care that the gossip mongers in the neighborhood are now talking about her, interpreting her coming home late at night in a taxi cab as a "booking" with a customer in the sex trade.

"They will not earn money gossiping about me," she said defiantly.

Ina vows that she would not leave their family house, a two-story affair that has yet to be completed.

"I also gave my parents the money to fix the roof," she said. "But they need more money to finish building the house."

Her mother admitted that the family depends on Ina for money.

That money might soon be coming in by the bundle. Since the book came out here, Ina has decided to become a bold star.

Photo session

Since this interview, Ina has gone to a photo shoot for her publicity shots as a bold actress. She has also gone to a casting session for director Joven Tan's new bold flick.

Ina has just signed a contract with a talent manager, who promised to book her for shows and movie roles. Ina's mother, her eyes dry of bitter tears, signed the management contract as her daughter's legal guardian, willingly. The night they signed the contract, Ina lit a cigarette for the first time in front of her mother.

"I have been smoking since I was 12," she said. "She finally find out I did just tonight," Ina added, referring to her mother.

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Thank you for the music!

The San Miguel Chorale, Las Piñas bamboo organ festival and Pasig music festival leave music lovers asking for more

THE SAN Miguel Philharmonic Orchestra and Master Chorale

By Antonio C. Hila
Contributor

IN THE heat of the current political campaign, the performing arts in music has likewise reached a feverish festive pitch.

This simply indicates that musical performances will remain for all seasons. The ever-burgeoning music lovers have kept the musical performing arts alive and kicking.

At the CCP Main Theater, the San Miguel Foundation for the Performing arts proudly showcased the ravishing performance of the San Miguel Chorale and the San Miguel Philharmonic Orchestra under the authoritative baton of Eudenice V. Palarauan, one of the country's leading choral conductors.

Aptly billed "Kayumanggi," the concert was virtually a choral presentation that featured Filipino as well as Asian compositions written in the post-colonial idiom and which underscored the native point of view. These compositions, exuding a primarily religious fervor, veered away from the Western model to truly reflect what is known as the "other voice."

Perhaps in keeping with the spirit of Vatican II that had finally recognized the logic of keeping the liturgy close to the tradition of particular groups of people, contemporary Philippine and Asian liturgical music relies mainly on the use of the country's rich ethnic and native musical traditions.

For indeed, liturgical music achieves relevance only if it is fashioned out of the musical environment of the people who had shaped its ethos. The language becomes clear and intelligible. It integrates, rather than alienates.

A capella

The entire first half of the program was rendered almost a capella, enriched only by a minimal use of Asian or Philippine ethnic instruments. In some numbers, vocal rendition did not follow the sensibility of the Western bel canto but explored the Asian manner of vocal rendition—at times guttural, high-pitched or a combination, as the case may be.

Chanting, which allows reciting of tones in flexible rhythms, was likewise very much evident. Droning, exciting rhythm ensured by the simultaneous use of different kinds of meter, and alluring texture—enhanced, for instance, by the use of pentatonic scale—were also much in evidence.

A work was even set as a liturgy for liberation. These were shown in Francisco Feliciano's "Silence my Soul;" Kughaho Chishi's "Nagamiqo Pishipuwo Aghushiqalo Julo;" Excelsis Ayog Betil, "Alleluya" and "Glong ngo ko;" Joy Tavas Nilo's "Uma's Comat Pagiram;" Ryan Cayabyab's "Preghiera Semplice;" Christian Isaac Tamaela's "Tokigong;" Indira Batara Simanjuntak's "Pentatonic Sanctus;" Dennis Gregory Arcelo Sugarol's "Mga Pagdayeg;" and Jerry Amper Dapap's "Alleluia" from "The Redemption."

Francisco Feliciano and Jerry Dadap's works as opening and final numbers evoked a truly intense feeling of high spirituality. Feliciano's work quietly invoked a profuse prayerfulness in a simple, meditatively scored work that relied on superb rendition and tonal blocking, the choir being lined up to encircle the audience from the stage to the boxes.

Dadap, on the other hand, concluded the liturgy with a vibrant, rhythmically exciting work that spanned a dynamic, wide range. Conductor Palaruan acted as the high priest in leading the choir to celestial heights.

Bravos

The second part showcased the works of Ryan Cayabyab, one of the country's most versatile composers. Earlier, his setting of St. Francis of Assisi's prayer for peace, "Preghiera Semplice," which had its world premiere, was received with a thunderous applause, spiced with shouts of bravos.

"Misa 2000" and "Epithalamium" from "Rama Hari," with lyrics by Bienvenido Lumbera, as well as a host of songs like "Tuwing Umuulan at Kapiling Ka," "Iduyan Mo," and "Paraiso," which were played with the San Miguel Philharmonic Orchestra, offered more listening pleasure. Here, Palaruan shifted gears with impressive results, conducting both the choir and orchestra.

"Mass 2000" is also scored in the "other voice." It refused to be cast into the traditional Mass, but was instead scored in the contemporary idiom, which revealed sensitivity to native musical forms.

Unlike the Western model, the Mass was not written to highlight an ostentatious display of vocal virtuosity. Cayabyab's music was direct and straightforward as in the "et incarnnatus est" in the "Credo," the very core of the Christian faith, which he scored in a majestic manner that struck a close resemblance to all grand Masses scored in the Western tradition.

The pop section was a fait accompli. This was the turf of Cayabyab. We simply salute this composer, who is incomparable in versatility.

THANK D2

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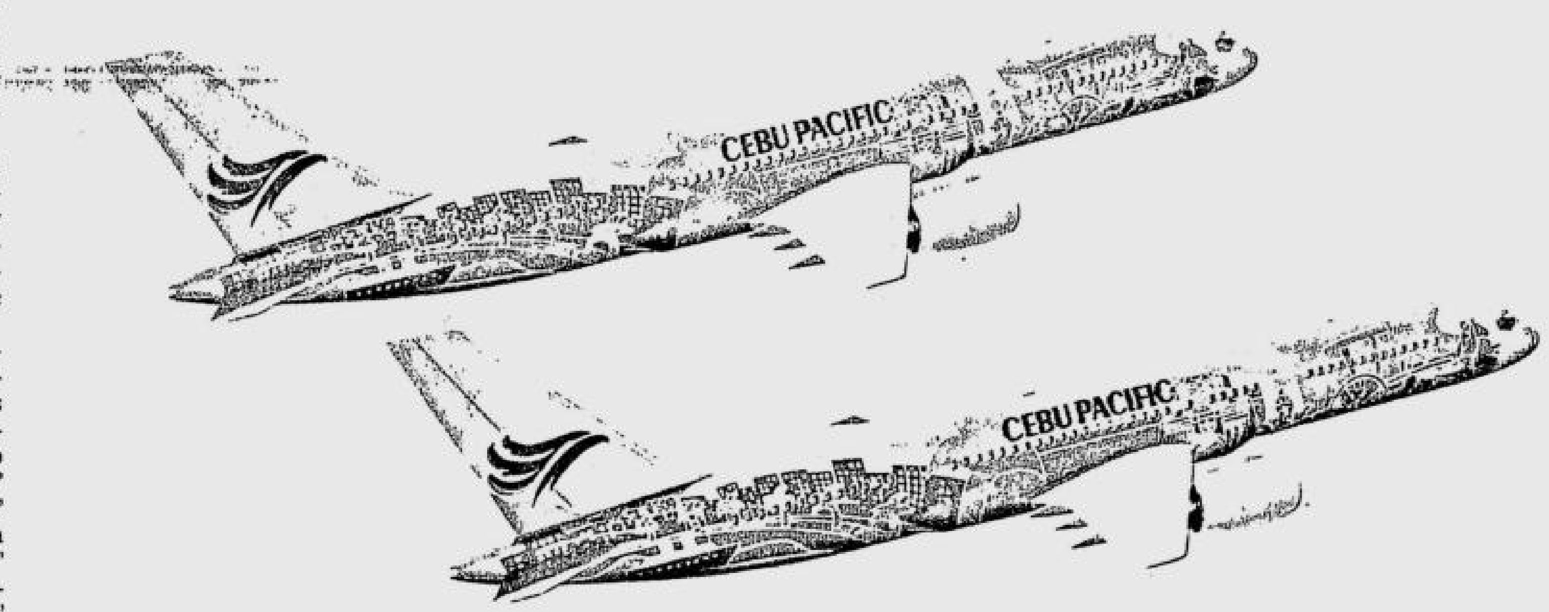

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Per DTI-NCR Permit no. 0818, series of 2004.

SOME Mangyans in their new home

MY mother with the Mangyans

TEACHER Rebecca (left)

Lessons from the Mangyans

ALL4ART

Bea Zobel Jr.

MY MOTHER first met the Iraya Mangyan people on the Aninuan Beach of Mindoro. In her own words, the Mangyans were dressed so unusually that "they seemed like an apparition."

As she approached them, they started running.

According to the CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Art, Mangyan is the collective name of seven ethnolinguistic groups which live in the highlands of Mindoro. These groups are the Iraya, Alangan, Tadyawan, Hanunoo, Buhid, Taubuhid and the Batagnon.

When my parents built a rest house in Northern Miridoro it was the Iraya Mangyan that they encountered. "Iraya" means "people from upstream."

Over the years the different Mangyan groups have had an uneasy relationship with the other people of Mindoro. Often misconceptions and generalizations have arisen on both sides.

My mother innocently got entangled with one of the racial stereotypes when she was told that if she wanted to befriend the Mangyans she should offer them sardines.

Can you just picture it? My mother running down the beach, arms akimbo, hands filled with cans of sardines shouting, "Stop! Stop! I am a friend!" (You're absolutely right, if I were one of the Iraya Mangyan I, too, would run for my life!) Eventually, my mom managed to get through to her new friends. With the help of translations she learned that they lived way up in the mountains.

Up into the mountain went my mother to try to help her new friends in any way she could. Her first visit gave her a truly aerobic workout! We laugh about it now but it was a hard climb. And it was a journey my mother would make many times over the years. Often her treks were quite hazardous.

Courageous

Eventually my mother would meet Rebecca Presentación, one of the most courageous and dedicated teachers I have ever known.

This is her story: In 1983, having just become a teacher in Puerto Galera, she was sent by her supervisor to teach the Mangyans. No one wanted the job as it was a four-hour trek up the mountain. She would start at 6 a.m., equipped with two books for herself. There was no money for paper or writing materials. She would teach Grade 1, 2, 3, however she could.

Her first day, she remembers being furious at having to take on this job. She told herself that she had not come this far in her career to go and teach in the mountains.

Yet, it did not take too much time before her whole life was to be dedicated to these wonderful people. She says it was only when she met the Mangyans that she understood what kindness, generosity and selflessness were all about. She felt it was the Mangyans who were teaching her the important lessons of life. Rebecca would stay from Monday to Friday up in the mountain to lessen the long climbs. The number of students were never regular as they, too, had to cover great distances to reach the school. Many times the morning lessons would be taken up by building a fire to dry themselves from the rain. The children would have one meal a day, mainly *kamote*. Yet they wouldn't hesitate to share what they had with teacher Rebecca and each other.

She smiles at the thought they would call fiesta any day that rice would be part of their meal as it was such a rare commodity. It would never cross their minds to hide some newly acquired luxury.

Rebecca also remembers being taught the wonders and miracles of the forest. Much of the Mangyans' medicines were obtained from roots and leaves. However she did notice that, sadly, her wards had learning difficulties which were probably the result of poor nutrition.

In 1987, Rebecca married June Presentación, a social worker. June, too, would spend many hours dedicated to the Mangyans. In 1987, my mother came into the scene. Books, papers, pencils and Purefoods Spam were brought in! (Sadly they didn't like Spam!)

My mother started pumping the water from the river to their communities, a joint project with the Locsin. She took a doctor and a nurse to check them all. At one point, Rebecca was overdue to give birth. She had been advised that just going up the mountain would induce delivery. Her pregnancy entered its 10th month! When my mother found out she immediately took action. Rebecca soon found herself in Makati Medical with my mother sitting beside her. Of course a Caesarian delivery had to be initiated. Had the pregnancy lasted any longer, Rebecca would have lost her life.

Caught in the crossfire

Sometime around 1988, there was a horrible encounter between the NPA and the military. The Mangyans were caught in between. Their livestock was massacred and their school ridden with bullets. Frightened, the Mangyans went down and lived around Rebecca and June's house in the lowlands. Rebecca felt she had to encourage them to go back up as this was their way of life. They would go up during the day but would be down by nightfall. Nothing could persuade them to live up in the mountains again. My mother soon convinced my father to obtain three hectares of land for the Mangyans to call their own. She also brought in the Sisters of Charity of St. Anne. A school and clinic were set up. My mother persuaded the nuns to respect the Mangyan religion.

One morning, though, she saw them being baptized on the beach by another Christian group. She realized that so many people were interested in converting the Mangyans!

The Mangyans basically live off swidden agriculture or *kaingin*. They also gather what they need from the forest.

They made beautiful baskets. My mom became their top sales agent. (Read me next Monday to find out about their baskets!)

There was the time when my mother was advised to teach her Mangyan friends to fish. Fish was a good source of the protein so lacking in their diets. And by this time, they were living close to the sea. My mother bought them *bancas* and fishing equipment. But of course it didn't work. The Mangyans' mountain-based culture was too deeply rooted.

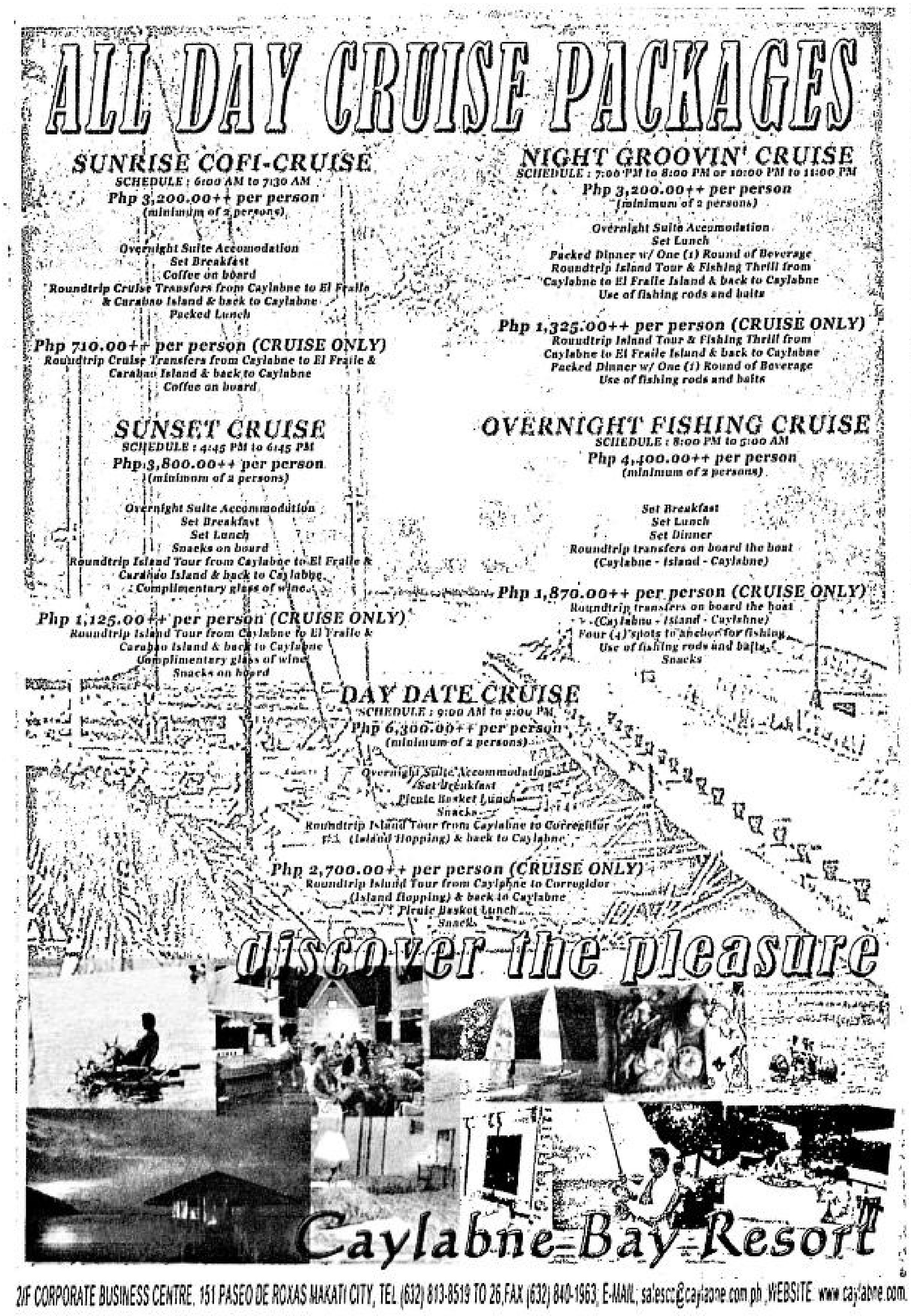
The members of the Iraya Mangyan community have changed my mother's life as she has changed theirs. She has come to be part of many of their daily events, their ups and downs. She has been involved with their births and their deaths. She has helped look for missing children. She once intervened to save the legs of an electrocuted man from being cut off. She has helped young people find jobs and happily listens when they call to tell her of their success—just like any other proud parent!

Through all of this, my mother, like Rebecca, insists that she has learned so much from the Mangyans. She has learned that there are treasures in the forest, it is not easy to teach farmers how to fish and that rice must always be shared.

When we ask her why she helps the Mangyans she answers very simply: "They are our neighbors. It is our duty to help them." Happily the Mangyans also have their own kind words. One of their elders, Ka Juan, had this to say: "If there is a God (maybe Ka Juan was confused by all the attempts to Christianize him), your parents are like a second god."

I wonder how many wonderful stories are out there about the rewards of working for the most neglected sectors of our society.

For questions and comments, e-mail beartist@filipinaslibrary.org.ph or address letters to Filipinas Heritage Library, Makati Ave., Ayala Triangle, Makati City.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Packed Dinner w/ One (1) Round of Beverage
Use of fishing rods and baits

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Mosaics on display

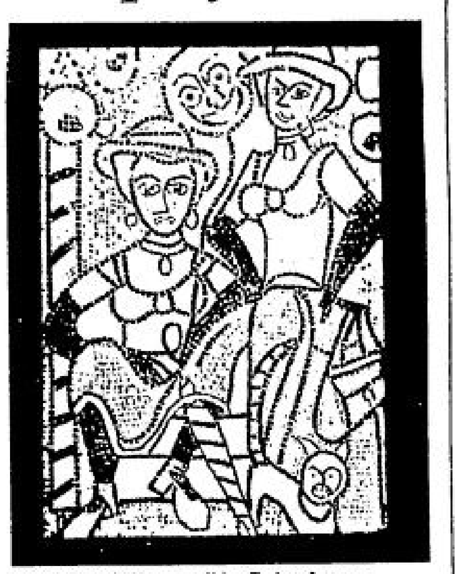
ARTISTS and good pals Candice Cruz Cepeda, 24, and Baba Gregorio Arroyo, 23, would like to introduce Filipinos to an alternative way of appreciating art.

For them, mosaics have rich texture—the combination of sizes, shapes and colors can make any flat surface a sculptural encounter. The infinite number of colors and degrees of transparencies create experiences that no other medium can.

The artists offer a wide product line of home décor like vases, bowls, picture frames, mirrors and furniture fixtures as well as architectural pieces such as tabletops, murals and floor arrangements for the corporate client.

They use vitreous glass tiles for their mosaics, and also mirrors, broken glass, stained glass and ceramic tiles to create a rich and striking palette.

Their mosaic works are on exhibit at The Palms Country Club, Filinvest, Alabang, Muntinlupa, until March 26.


"SALOON Women," by Baba Arroyo. Medium: glass tiles

Thank you for the music!

From page D1

Las Piñas festival

At Las Piñas last Feb. 27, the 29th International Bamboo Organ Festival was launched with much fanfare.

As in the past, the festival centered on the Bamboo Organ and choral renditions. Among those who pooled their talents to let the baroque music sparkle were organist Jennifer Pascual; soloists Rachelle Gerodias, soprano, Janet Sabas-Aracama, mezzo soprano, Bartholomeus de Kegel, tenor, and Andrew Fernando, baritone; the Ateneo Chamber Choir; the Philippine Chamber Choir and the Festival Ensemble; and Jonathan Velasco, conductor.

The festival's artistic director, Della G. Besa, ensured the exemplary quality of the program. The festival itself has been going for almost three decades now.

Philippine-German Month

At Paco Park, the 29th-year celebration of the Philippine-German Month was celebrated last February.

The third concert, "Strings and Wind Harmony," featured the Trio in E-Flat major for piano, violin and horn, Op.40 by Brahms and Quintet for clarinet and strings in A Major, K581 by Mozart.

This chamber presentation all the more underscored the beauty of the venue for al fresco performances. The event would not have been possible were it not for the efforts of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Rodel Colmenar, horn; Oscar C. Yatco, violin; and Nena del Rosario-Villanueva, piano, were the featured artists for the first number. Ariel Sta. Ana, clarinet; Yatco, violin; Mary Grace Martinez, violin 2; Ivan Saraza, viola; and Geronimo Z. Velasco, violoncello, were the performers in the second and last number.

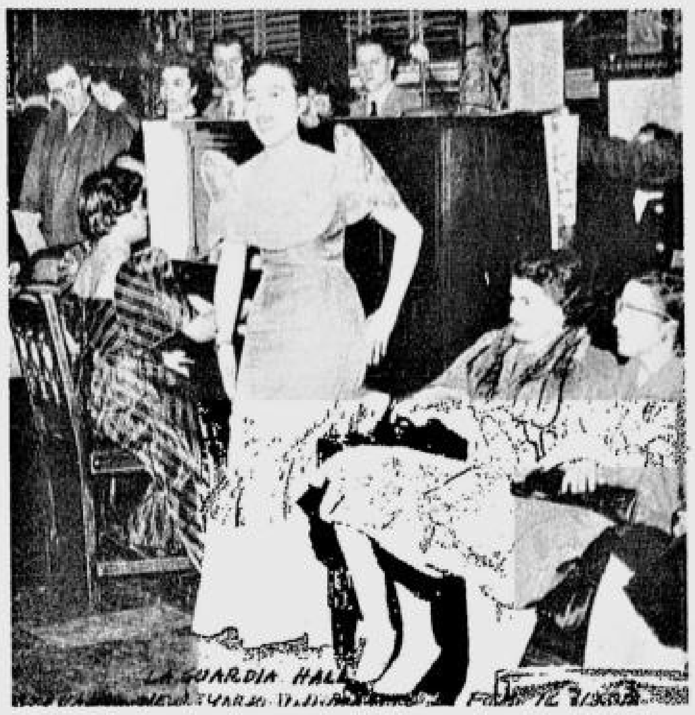
Pasig Music Festival

At the Pasig City Museum, Pablo Tariman's Summer Music Festival has made classical music alive. Now on its third year, the festival is also making its presence felt in the metropolis.

Taking center stage in one of the concerts was young violinist Diomedes Saraza Jr., who forged an unforgettable collaboration with pianist Greg Zuniega. The highlight of their performance was an engaging rendition of Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op.64.

We hope the best for the profusely gifted young violinist whose dream it is to continue his studies abroad.

Another 45 in Rustica Carpio's life



CARPIO singing a *kundiman* at the 1956 International Festival in New York University.

By Nenet Galang-Pereña
Contributor

SHE glides into center stage, serpentine skirt swishing and crisp kimono shimmering with every step—an inextinguishable fire in her eyes. She sang a *kundiman* and the Far Eastern University (FEU) Auditorium became a magical place.

It was a sublime afternoon, with the diva of Philippine radio, the unsinkable Tia Dely Magpayo, and the Mabuhay Singers joining "Rustie."

Rustica Cruz Carpio, educator, stage, television and movie actress, singer, artist par excellence, is celebrating 45 years in the legitimate stage this year.

Recently, Carpio staged at the Paco Park a dramatic monologue of the character Kikay (from Marcelino Agana's "New Yorker in Tondo") that she popularized to commemorate this milestone in her long and colorful career in the theater. She has performed the role more than 20 times, including appearances with award-winning Filipino movie actors Eddie Rodriguez and Robert Arevalo.

Theater seemed more of a detour for Carpio who got an Associate in Commercial Science degree, with honors, from the former Philippine College of Commerce (now Polytechnic University of the Philippines or PUP). Later, she would have a Bachelor of Arts degree major in English, magna cum laude, from the Manuel L. Quezon University (MLQU); Master in Education, major in Speech Education, from New York University, as a Fulbright grantee and International House scholar; and Doctor of Philosophy, major in Literature, *meritissmus*, from the University of Santo Tomas.

Carpio was a fellow in Dramatic Arts of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization at the National School of Drama and Asian Theatre Institute in India.

Reaping honors

Her stage performances had won her 45 honors and awards both here and abroad. She has acted in 45 films and appeared in 45 television programs/episodes, the longest as Hermana Pule in the 13-episode "Noli Me Tangere" directed by National Artist Eddie Romero.

With the recurrence of the figure 45 in her career, Carpio can only wonder if it is accidental, coincidental or providential.

The eminent theater personality said, "I am donating these awards to the PUP archives and the Women of Malolos shrine in Bulacan as my way of thanking the Filipino people for appreciating my art for over 45 years."

She is also giving away her costumes and other personal memorabilia to the museums.

Carpio, aside from being a consummate actress, is also a dedicated teacher, turning down movie offers that would get in the way of her academic responsibilities.

"All my life, I have been a teacher and, one time or another, an administrator," she says. Often, she had to put her acting career on hold in favor of the academe. The daughter of a Bulacan teacher and a farmer-merchant, Carpio was born in Paombong and raised in Hagonoy.

"I used to dream of becoming a lawyer or an opera singer," she recalls. But, at 23, she became the youngest faculty member of PUP, only interrupting her teaching for study grants in Illinois and New York University.

After a stint at FEU, she organized the mass communications program of the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila. Carpio also held the Manila Bulletin professorial chair in Journalism at the PUP Graduate School and the Albertus Magnus professorial chair in Humanities at the UST Graduate School. She was thrice dean at PUP and, currently, is the head of FEU's President's Committee on Culture.

Dr. Lydia Reyes Echauz, FEU president, says, "She keeps the arts alive here."

Director with a mission

Carpio was director/principal actress/leader of Sining Silangan, the first and, so far, the only Filipino theater group to perform in China. As stage director, she tries to help the audience analyze human nature as it unfolds through the drama of the theater. Last month, she staged "Leonor Rivera" with FEU faculty and students in the cast, part of her campaign for the survival of theater in the academe.

IN MOSCOW, Carpio examines a theater billboard during her theater tour of Russia in 1984.

Veteran writer and critic Amadis Ma. Guerrero, reviewing her book "Life is a Stage," called her a Renaissance woman, one of the many "titles" bestowed on her, including Doris Day of the Philippines for being the youngest member of the First Filipino Entertainment Troupe sent by the Philippine government to Korea and Japan during the Korean war. A battleground was named "Rustie Hill" after her and was adopted in the war maps of Korea.

Despite the accolade, Carpio remains humble and amiable. Dr. Belen L. Tangco, now dean of UST's Faculty of Arts and Letters and her colleague at the university's Graduate School Academic Theater, said in an interview for the school paper Varsitarian in 2001: "Rustica has remained warm and humble because her attitude is more of a professor than a celebrity... She is a celebrity in her own right, an excellent performer and a great academician."

Former students have found her classes very enriching.

After 45 years of fame and glory, Carpio is still distinguished by her humility despite having become an institution in Philippine theater.

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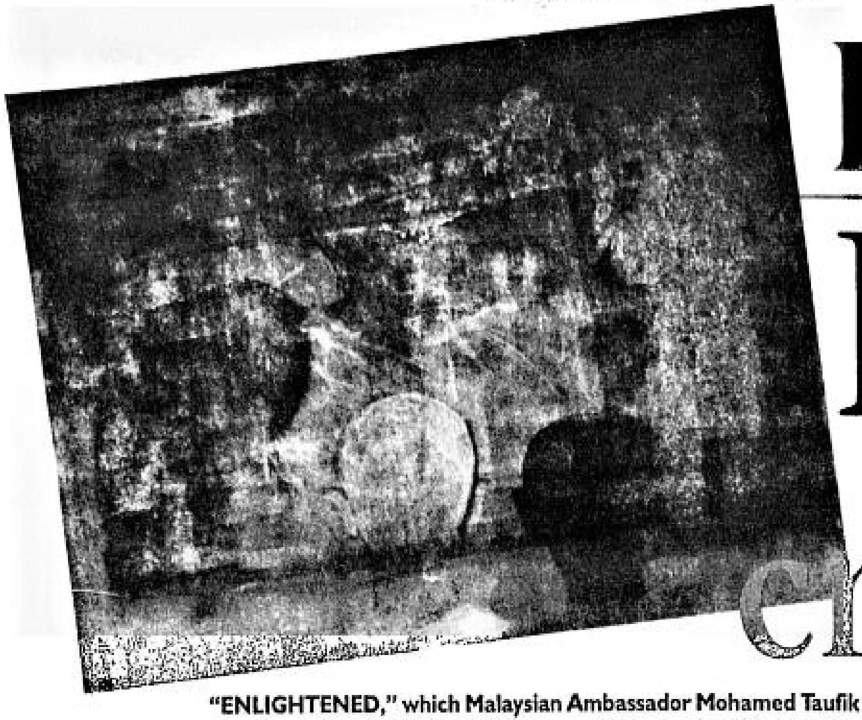

"ENLIGHTENED," which Malaysian Ambassador Mohamed Taufik painted after a pilgrimage to Mecca that "changed my life completely," will open his exhibit today.

By James P. Ong
Contributor

FLORA and fauna is the main theme in Malaysian Ambassador Mohamed Taufik's art exhibit, which opens today at his residence in Dasmariñas Village, Makati City. There are 52 works on display—"one for each year of my life."

How can this hard-working diplomat still find time to paint? "Painting is my passion. I really want to be a full-time artist," he swears. Taufik is drawn to his canvas either first thing in the morning, after his prayers, or just before he retires to bed. "I'll paint maybe 15 or 20 minutes each time. I am a very impatient person so I can't stay doing one thing for too long. The longest I can paint is an hour-and-a-half."

The bulk of the works on display were done in Manila, from the time he was first posted here in 2000. While he has always found time to paint in his previous posting in Brunei, it is here that he has become prolific, surrounded by his well-tended garden where he grows orchids, and his beautiful pets, Bantam chickens which now number to almost 60. The latter, he says, will be the subject of his next exhibit.

He is also inspired by his pocket garden back in Kuala Lumpur, and from memory he draws some of his plants in "Dream Garden," an interesting mix of almost 30 species all painted in excruciating detail—fortune plants, calla lilies, ferns, tulips and anthuriums, among everything else.

Surely one of the most coveted pieces, however, will be "Green Goddess," a huge acrylic-and-pastel rendition of many kinds of orchids. "Orchids are a big thing here, I've been to the orchid shows," he shares.

Personal work

The most personal work on display-and which Taufik believes is his best work-is "Enlightened," a semi-abstract piece with bald heads on the canvas. The one in the center is his own head, which he shaved in 1998 after completing a 10-day pilgrimage in Mecca "that changed my life completely. It gave me back my faith, I turned back to God and religion, and started to have faith again in people."

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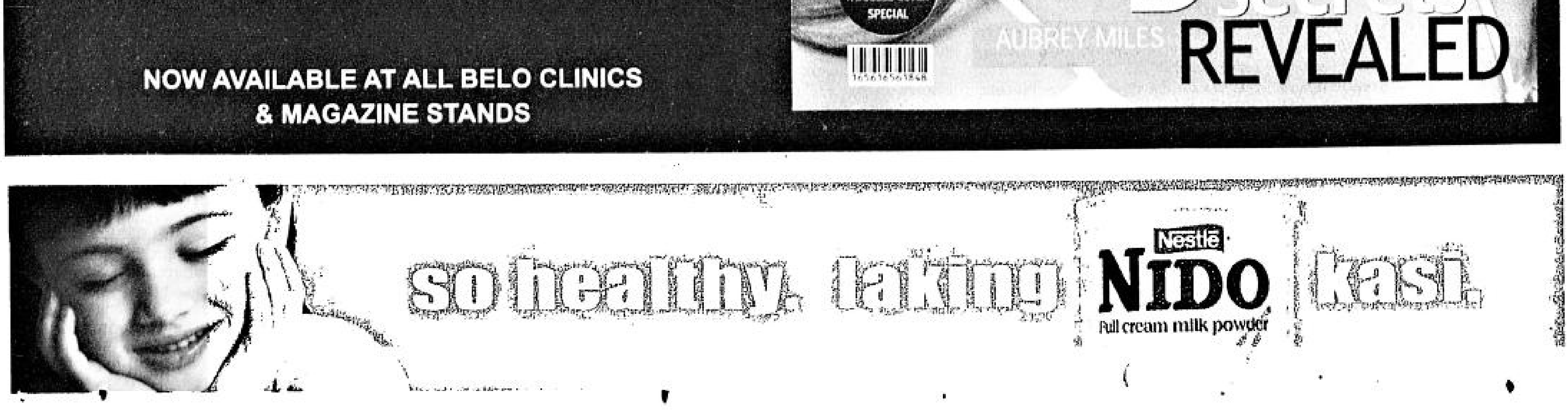
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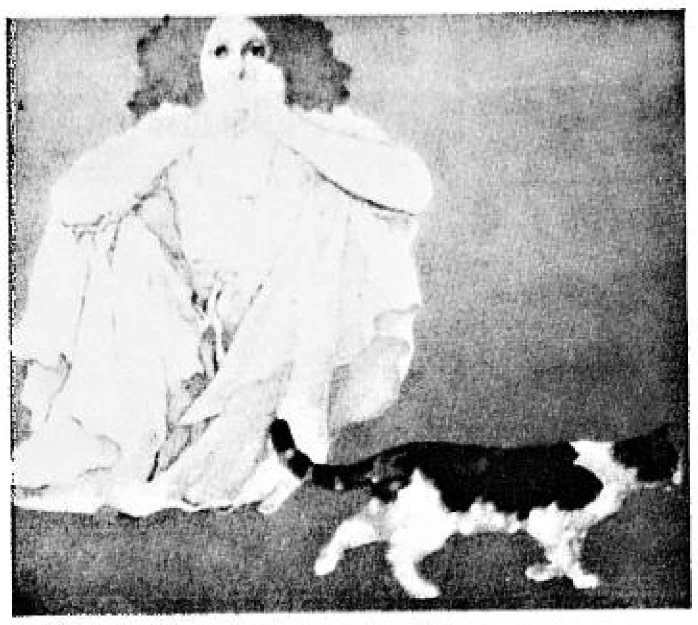

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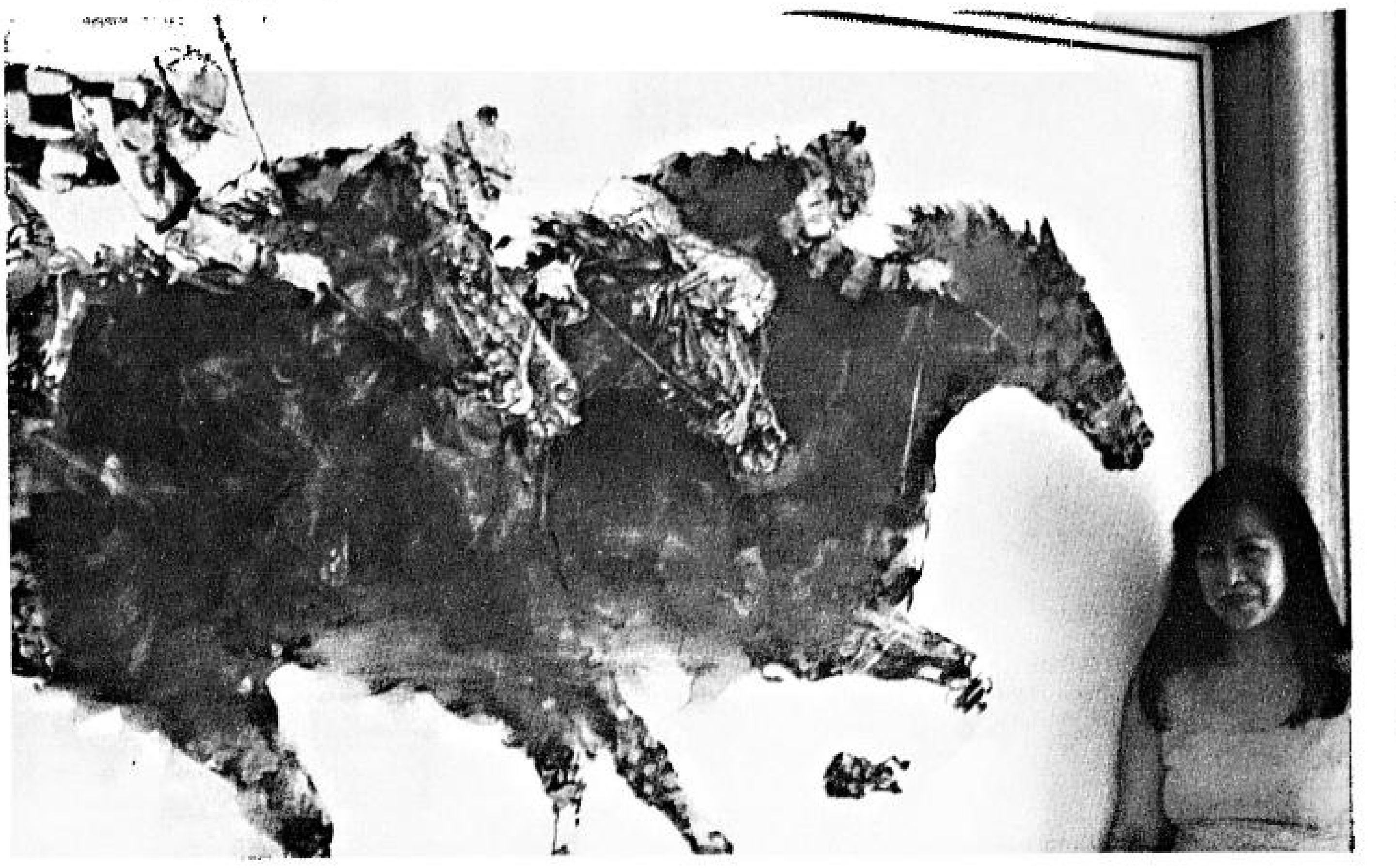
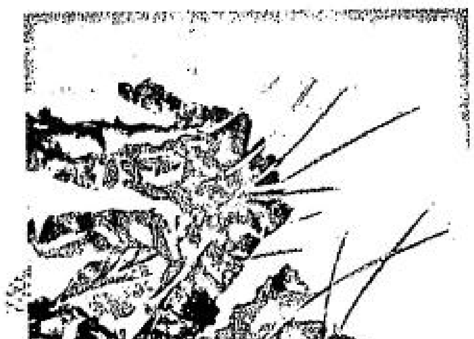
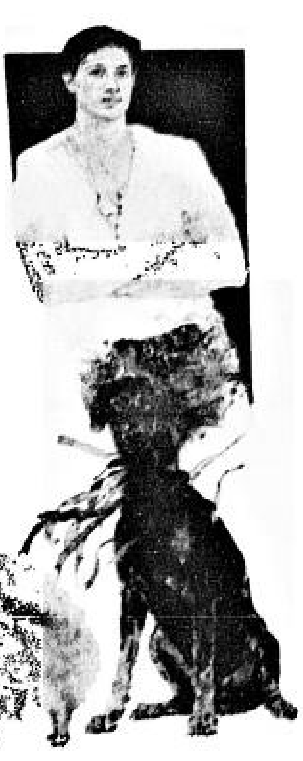


ISABEL Diaz beside her celebrated "Horses" (oil on canvas)



"BIRDS of Paradise and Banana Leaves"



"ILLAC Diaz"

Isabel Diaz, the realist

By Carmina Sanchez
Contributor

ACCORDING to an American survey, "Isabel" is the 313th most popular female first name. Famous Isabels include novelist Isabel Duncan, Queen Isabel of Spain and even St. Isabel of France. It is also the name of a notorious hurricane that hit the US.

Isabels are historically and obviously women of great strength and character. And this particular Manila encounter with another Isabel proves this truth once more.

Isabel Diaz, although perennially linked to the locally famous Diaz clan of beauties and brains (Gloria Diaz, Rio Diaz, Benjie Diaz, et al), has also earned a name for herself as a formidable artist.

Upon meeting her, one realizes that she is first a woman then a mother, a sister, a friend, a lover, and an artist. This also makes you realize that Isabel is really not much different from the woman next door. She is, despite all her innate characteristics, quite normal.

So what makes being normal that newsworthy? This "average" Isabel has the magical flair for bringing life to an empty canvas. Her blooms of vivid color are exquisite. The movements of her horses are so dynamic. And the people whose portraits she paints hold such interest to the viewer. In fact, a famous local banker-cum-art collector calls her one of the most important Filipino painters of our time.

On March 23, 24 and 25, Isabel Diaz comes home from New York to do a one-woman show at the Nielson Tower in Makati. Globe Platinum's House of Art presents her New York style and Manila attitude for three exclusive days.

Below are highlights of an evening of talk with Isabel Diaz:

You have an art show coming up. When was your last show? Where and how was it?

I've never done a show like this upcoming event in Manila. My last one was in a warehouse where I hung all my works from top to bottom against a black backdrop. We invited close friends and family. That was years ago.

What inspired you to do this show?

Inspiration is a word that never comes up in my vocabulary. I think this time I am enjoying the mere idea of a new project. The actual craft of preparing my works and executing big ideas and a big project was what drove me.

Even more, I am just eager to present this new collection to a new breed of young art collectors.

Why the distinct interest in the new breed of young art collectors?

I never want to be passé. I don't want to have to deal with my works being stored and not displayed because newer and younger generations cannot relate to them. My interest in these people is brought about by my constant wish to be a relevant and current painter, one who is enjoyed by generations and generations of art patrons.

I feel that my works are not commodities of value but are works to be appreciated. I don't want people to buy my paintings because they are a good investment. I want people to collect them because they are happy to have them hang in their homes for years and years without losing their appeal. If I achieve that, I would be happy.

What best describes your style of work?

I'd rather show it than explain it... It makes me lose interest when someone comes up to me and asks me that question. It makes me feel like they don't know me or my works. But to make things simple, I consider myself a realist.

What subject, then, are you most known for?

Flowers. By sheer number of what's been made and its seeming general acceptability, my rendition of this subject is particularly popular.

You are also famous for your portraits of famous personalities and local society people. Which are your most successful portrait works?

It's always of the men. Men who don't consider themselves good-looking but have great character normally come out strong and attractive in my works. I think I draw out the character of a man more than of a woman. For a woman character is weakened by her physical beauty, which is unfortunate since character is undeniably more interesting.

In relation to that, I think character does not deny men good looks. But if a woman doesn't look good, her character does little to make her attractive. It's ironic.

In any case I think my portraits of Manolo Lopez and Philip Cruz were quite successful.

What happens when your subject for a portrait doesn't excite you?

It doesn't happen. I can get my energy through the actual act of painting. When I stare at a face and I sit down to work on a portrait, I end up liking the way the lines on the face look, how the curves come across and all other things that I may not even see when I look at a person or when I talk to him or her.

You are the only Filipino who was able to do a painting of Prince Philip of England. Please share the experience with us.

Prince Philip plays polo in Florida once a year. I did polo paintings in Florida for the Palm Beach Polo Club.

One time I was invited to take part in a parade. The Polo Club at the time also put one of my paintings on the cover of its annual. From there, my work was noticed and I was given the opportunity to paint Prince Philip and his friends while playing polo.

Having been exposed just as much to foreign personalities and opportunities in the US as you have here in Manila, would you consider yourself an NY artist or a Filipino artist?

I'm a Filipino artist who works in New York.

I find it odd that some people claim that my style is not Filipino. I ask them: Do they see most of the traditional subjects on Filipino paintings and find them as interesting? I don't.

Theme does not automatically dictate the nationality or style of a painter. These are simply the things that I enjoy and end up painting.

Cordillera up close and personal

By Gino Dormiendo
Contributor

THEY came from places far and near, gravitating between urban and rural milieus alike, but the lure of this mountain oasis near Baguio proved irresistible to these modern settlers.

Once a grazing land for cattle, Tamawan Village today has become a haven for artists who dream of ultimately striking a balance between culture and nature, even as they immerse themselves in the life-ways of the Cordillera folk.

These 10 artists, majority of them natives of Cordillera, have bonded once again in a show of solidarity through their art. The Tam-awan artists, so-named after the place that means "vantage point" in the local Ibaloi tongue, have hurdled their initial shows with distinction, mainly because they continue to work in a site far removed from the distractions of modern life.

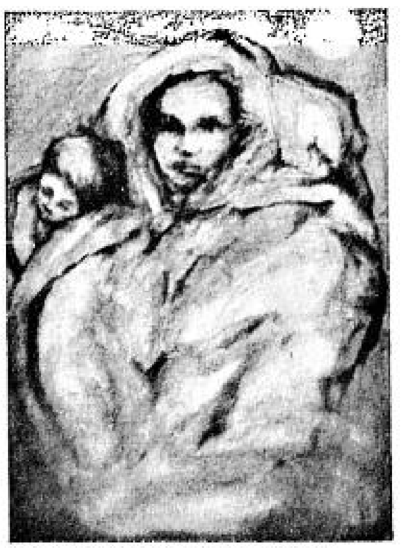
Under the guidance of their revered leader, Benedicto Cabrera, or BenCab, the group has made it a point to mount a show of their recent works, not to mention their individual exhibitions, both here and abroad.

In the current show, the Tam-awan artists have wisely stuck to their old repertoire of Cordillera folk and culture, though some (as in the case of Leonard Aguinaldo and John Frank Sabado) have much more to share by way of their predilection for folk mythology merged with a postmodern sensibility.

Also evident in this show is the members' predisposition for the representational mode, which is not at all surprising, given the track record of the group and the nurturing role of their role models, particularly BenCab and the more successful and more experienced members.

Trademark style

True to form, BenCab has opted to show a work in his trademark style, two figures with unmistakable indigenous features, seemingly conjoined, a modest work when compared to the others. It is perhaps the artist's way of making room for the members, as this is to be taken as a group effort rather than as a venue to promote a cult for an individual artist.



"MOTHER and Child," by Buddy Cabrera

Buddy Cabrera, BenCab's nephew and new recruit, paints in a manner reminiscent of the early BenCab, from the sepia tone down to the hideous-looking visage on the canvas.

Easily the most striking works are those of Aguinaldo, with two works in colored rubber cut that explore in a filmic three-dimensional manner the topography of the place, rendered in the style of the hieroglyphics.

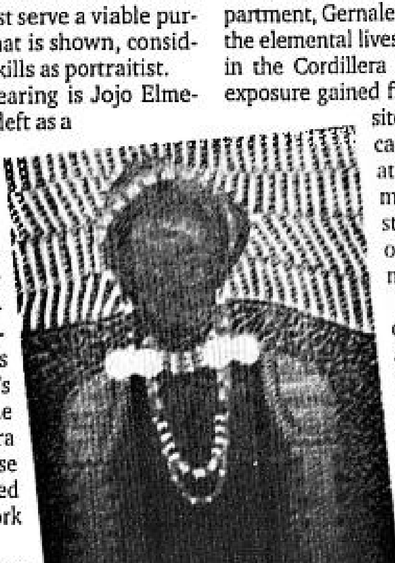
A winner in the recent Philippine Art Awards sponsored by Philip Morris, Aguinaldo shows what singular talent and critical imagination can create, a rare sensibility that fuses historical roots and a postmodern approach.

Likewise, Sabado, who has several solo shows to his credit, is represented with two portraits of the Cordillera Man and Woman, reconfigured in a non-orthodox way, complete with iconic signs and touches and with Sabado's trademark strings attached onto the canvas.

No less imposing is Ged Alangui's diptych in mixed media, "Assimilation and Nativism," which shows sundry characters who became specimens of the American colonialist policy at the turn of the century, through the infamous 1904 St. Louis Exposition.

Alangui, however, has to restrain his propensity for color and learn to harness space that must serve a viable purpose other than what is shown, considering his vaunted skills as portraitist.

Particularly endearing is Jojo Elmeda, who is equally deft as a portraitist. This is evident in his work, "Cultural Exchange" and "Paalam," with their subtle display of irony reverberating from the window that cuts through a plane's engine, and the faces of Cordillera children whose mother has decided to leave for work abroad.



"WOMAN," by John Frank Sabado

The most innovative artist this side of the Tam-awan art world goes to Jordan Mang-osan, a precursor of solar painting, by way of a magnifying glass and generous help from the sun. Mang-osan has long proven his mastery of the technique, which leaves the imprint of a naturally shaded composition on the canvas as well as the patina ripples that exposure to sunlight creates.

Roland Bay-an works in a modern pointillist manner, while Tuls Tulas has a new approach to still life, not post-card-pretty but more realistic and earthbound than the usual, as with most of the pieces in this show by artists who live close to nature.

Solo show

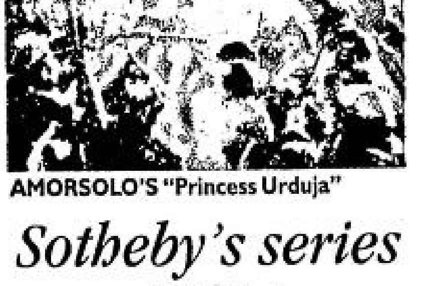
Elmer Gernale, in his 14th solo show, also pays tribute to the Cordillera folk with recent works simply called "Cordillera Series," at the Artistree Art Gallery (until March 29).

For several years now, since he retired from his job at the Ayala Museum Art Department, Gernale has been fascinated by the elemental lives of the indigenous folk in the Cordillera region. With valuable exposure gained from his visits to actual sites, Gernale has ably captured the local people at their most telling moments, and minus the stylish encumbrances other artists in this mode are wont to do.

By simply zeroing in on his main subject, and committing to memory what otherwise would have been irretrievably lost to the ordinary tourist, Gernale makes a valiant pitch to showcase the rare virtues of the Cordillera inhabitants.

Theirs is a hardy race, stoic and resolute, a people who have pride of place and a sense of dignity, so unlike other groups that have fallen prey to progress and development. A tribute that only an artist steeped in the art of representation like Gernale can do best.

E-mail the author at gdormiendo@yahoo.com



AMORSOLO'S "Princess Urduja"

Sotheby's series on Filipino Masters

ON MARCH 24 and 29 at 6 p.m., Kim Camacho, Philippine representative of Sotheby's, will discuss the Filipino Masters to be featured at the Southeast Asian paintings auction of Sotheby's in Singapore on April 4.

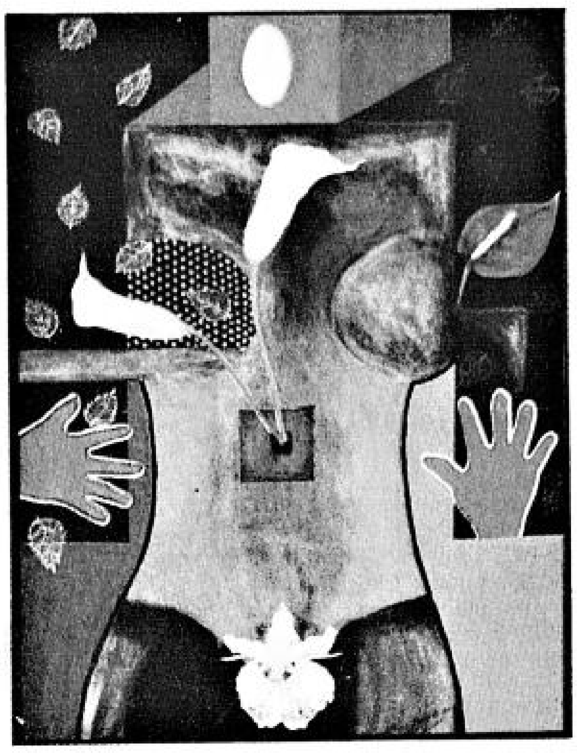
She will also cover Indonesian and Vietnamese artists and paintings by Europeans in Indonesia.

The lecture is one of a series of talks organized by Sotheby's in the Philippines to provide the public basic information on how to participate and bid at auctions, and how to appreciate the range of Southeast Asian works of art featured.

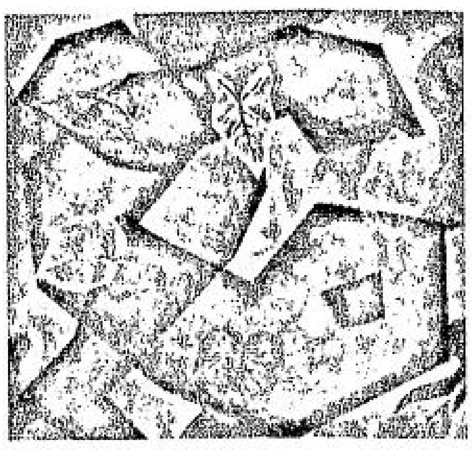
Among the highlights of the April 4 auction will be Fabian de la Rosa's 1920 painting, "Doing Laundry," several works by Fernando Amorsolo (including the 1959 painting of Princess Urduja), and a selection of modern and contemporary art by HR Ocampo (1977), Jose Joya ("Four Seasons," 1960), Arturo Luz ("Two Men On A Wire"), and Jerry Elizalde Navarro ("The Beginning of the End, Almost," 1991).

The sale also includes an important Fernando Zobel, a Galo Ocampo contemporary oil painting, a remarkable oil on canvas ("Planting Rice") by Theodoro Pascual Buenaventura, a number of breathtaking watercolors by Vicente Manansala ("Fish and Lace," 1966), and paintings by Romeo V. Tabuena ("Village Scene," 1963) and Federico Alcuaz ("Three Girls," 1986).

Call 8848241 for reservations.



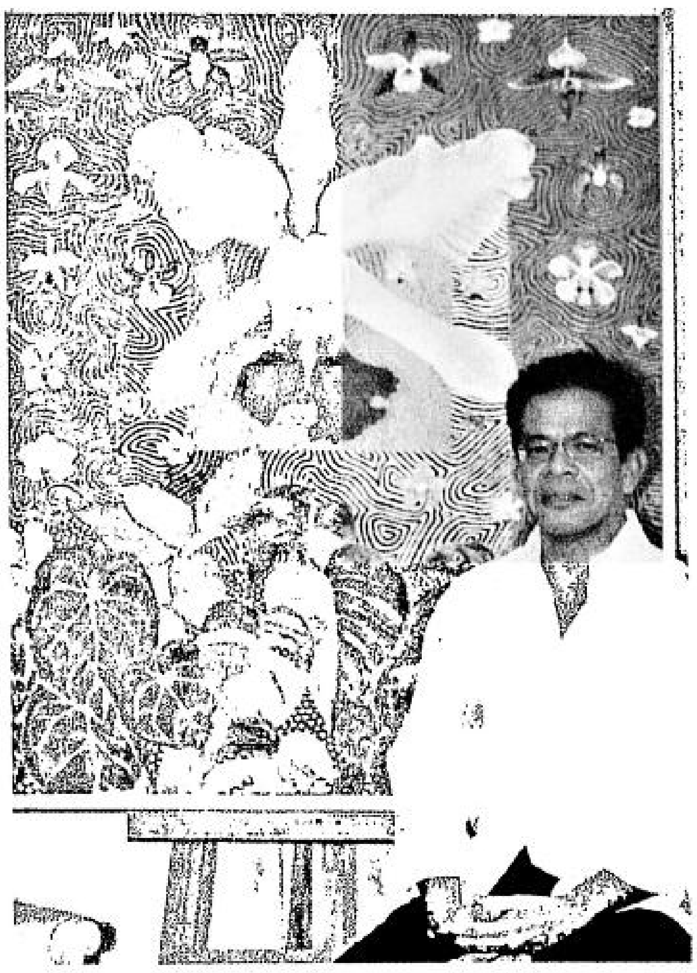
"TORSO," one of four pieces in this exhibit celebrating the human body, is a reminder of the importance of fitness, says Taufik.



"AN Arm and a Leg" was made after the envoy started going to the gym last year. He says he is now "addicted" to keeping fit.

Malaysian Ambassador Mohamed Taufik communes with the Muses in the thick of diplomacy

Envoy of creativity



IN "Green Goddess" (background), Ambassador Taufik paints several kinds of orchids in detail. He grows some of the plants in his well-tended garden.

AMBASSADOR Taufik says his Bantam chickens, now about 60 in number, will surely be the subject of a future exhibit.

From page E1

Although Taufik has been painting since he was a child ("My teacher in first year high school wrote in my report card that I was a budding artist, but my father discouraged me. I have no regrets, however.") and was even the "resident artist" in his university dormitory back in London ("We were all foreign students and I would paint the posters for all the student parties-Valentine's, Chinese New Year, Indian New Year"). There was almost a decade when he put a stop to this creative pursuit.

"I wasn't inspired to do anything, I was depressed because of my divorce in 1988, deaths in the family and many personal problems I couldn't overcome," he explains. After his pilgrimage, he felt well again and thus "Enlightened" was born.

"Enlightened" will open the exhibit, to be unveiled by guest of honor Gina de Venecia, whose Congressional Spouses Foundation will receive part of the proceeds. "I chose their Haven For Children project in Alabang because children are very close to my heart, especially since I don't have my own," he explains.

Figurative

Taufik's newest works, however, have a more exciting subject: human figures. "An Arm and a Leg" is his witty take on the gym culture, and his assessment of what it takes to get physically fit. Unknown to many, the Malaysian ambassador has been religiously going to the gym since last year and has lost pounds since.

There are also two nude works, "a reminder of the importance of fitness." All of his works are suffused with bright colors, a reflection of his current state of mind. "I'm very happy and optimistic, I can never paint dull colors," he says.

Upon seeing his paintings, Taufik was encouraged by his local artist friends to put up a show here; and since he already had enough pieces, culled from the past six years, he said yes. In the past weeks he has been busy signing his works, bringing them to framers and thinking up titles. And he's very excited. "It's a dream come true to have my own show," he smiles.

The artist's reception for 'Recent Works by Mohamed Taufik' will be held today at 5 p.m. Public viewing dates are from March 23 to 28, 2:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m. Call Flor or Rabelle at 8174581.

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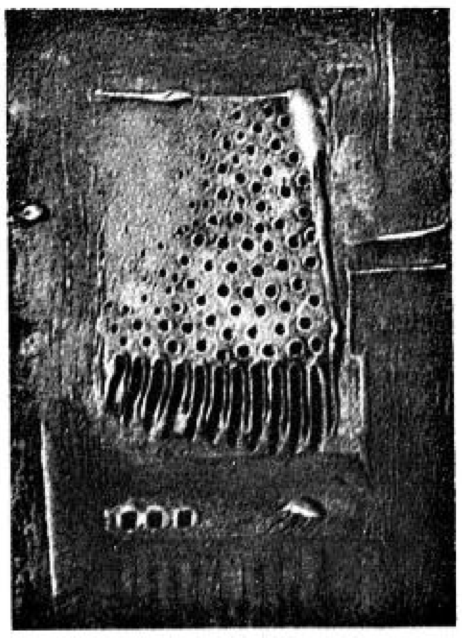
Sanso's Brittany landscapes at Joaquin

GALERIE Joaquin will exhibit landscapes by the internationally renowned Juvenal Sanso starting March 26 at its showroom at 371 P. Guevarra St and Montessori Lane, Addition Hills, San Juan (tel. 7239253 and -9418).

Featured in "Breadth of Visions" are 18 acrylic landscapes, mostly about Brittany, on canvas or paper. Sanso is joined by works by Dominic Rubio, Edwin Tres Reyes and the Guevarra Group of Artists.

Quartet at Astra

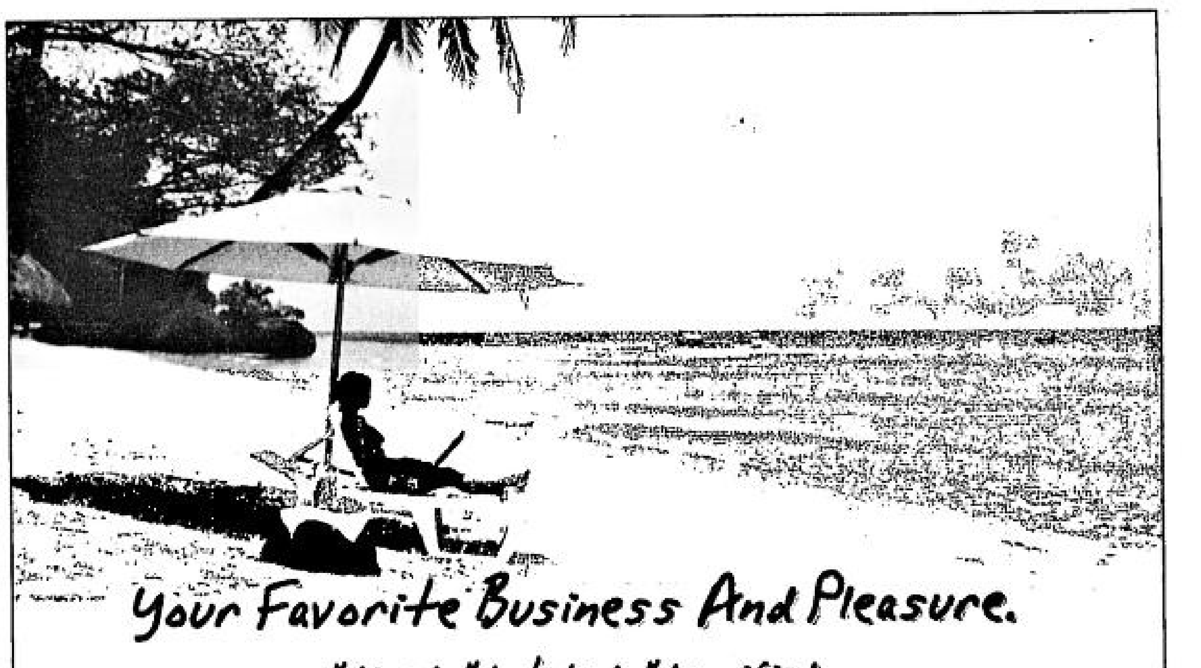


A PAINTING by Ronaldo Ruiz

"DEFINITIONS and Intuitions" features the quartet of Red Mansueto, Joe Bautista, Ronaldo Ruiz, and Manok Ventura from the College of Fine Arts of the University of the East. The show opens at the Gallerie Astra (2L, LRI Business Plaza, 210 Nicanor Garcia Street, formerly Reposo, Bel Air 2, Makati City) on March 19 at 7 p.m. It will run till April 2.

Mansueto has produced the "walls series," which explores the eerie resemblance of walls to people. Utilizing things usually considered eyesores, Bautista challenges the audience's perception. Ruiz, one of the recent CCP Thirteen Artist Award recipients, tackles serious social and personal issues in his "icon" series, which takes the computer's motherboard as a point of departure. Ventura, who won second prize at the recent Metrobank contest, tackles intra-personal and spiritual issues.

Call 8903988, or 7243032 and 7269015.



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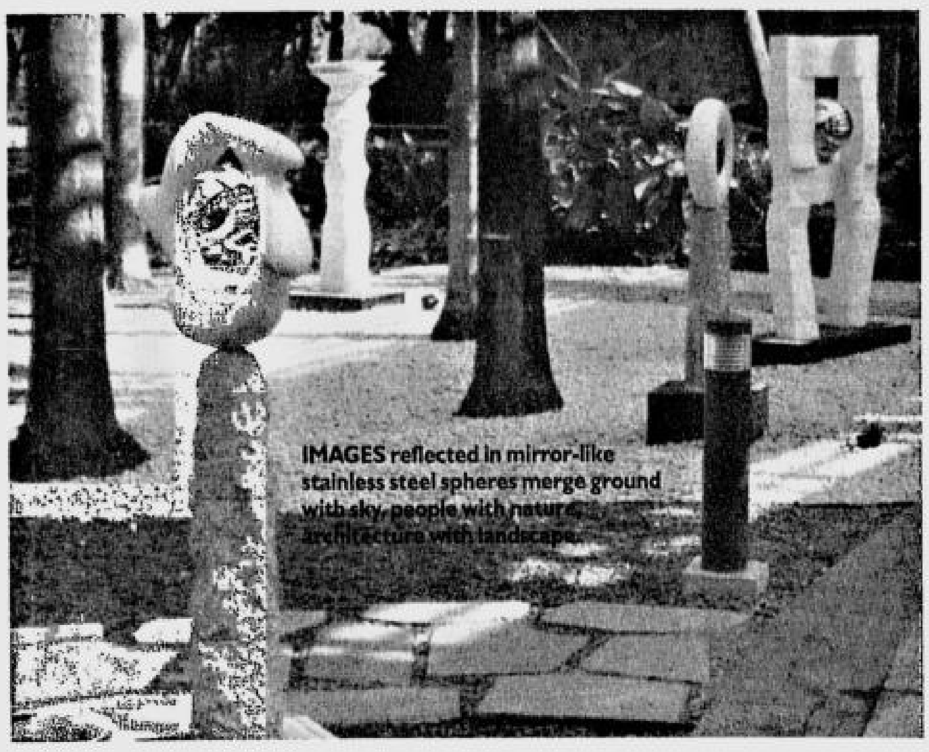


IMAGES reflected in mirror-like stainless steel spheres merge ground with sky, people with nature, architecture with landscape.

ONE of the rare expositions of public art in Manila is now at the Greenbelt 3 garden and Glorietta 4 park at Ayala Center. Large-scale work by multi-awarded sculptor Impy Pilapil, curated by Galeria Duemila, is on view until April 5.

So few urban amenities offer de-stressing alternatives for a Manileño to recharge his soul and mind. Recent projects, the new Liwasang Bonifacio Park, gentrification of the seaside promenade of Roxas Boulevard and pedestrianization of Rizal Avenue are initial attempts that provide escape valves but not enough to allow comfortable living in the city.

Public art is an overlooked urban amenity and awfully lacking in all Philippine cities. The Pilapil exhibit underscores the magnitude of that lack, illustrating that there is indeed a place for public art in our lives.

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

The artist's concept is to create an environment where everyone would be free to "mingle, touch, feel, reflect with, meditate with, or find some kind of soothing feelings with the work." She reaches out to her viewers, invites them to establish a relationship, no matter how fleeting, with her work.

Within public reach

The exhibit is completely experiential. The large sculptures stand on ground level. Others hang from trees. This is not the usual "look-only" exhibit with art pieces secured and kept out of public reach.

On the contrary, the series of sculptures is completely accessible to the public. The pieces invite visitors to walk around them, take a close look, touch and experience Pilapil's art.

The exhibit brings art to the people. Unlike in the traditional museum setting where art is detached from the viewer, Pilapil aims "to break the barriers that ordinary people feel exist when it comes to art." Breaking away from the elitist misconception of art, she invites the public to mingle and interact with her pieces.

The visual and tactile experience that her public sculpture offers is an opportunity for a viewer to "pause, reach out, and have time for oneself," Pilapil says. "It is my hope that each viewer will experience some kind of individual silence and inner peace."

Ocean of forms

The sculptures elicit peace. Elegantly conceived and meticulously executed in lustrous combinations of stone, marble, glass and stainless steel, each piece juxtaposes textures and contrasts materials that flow into an ocean of forms recalling the movement of water.

Inspired by the ocean, Pilapil's liquid shapes are undulating, upward-oriented forms in mirror-finished stainless steel that splash, grounded by sinuous multi-textured marble bases.

Her sculptures are ephemeral. Polished marble, glass and stainless steel capture the graceful motion of water, transmitting movement with strong visual clarity.

Hanging at different levels from tree branches, flat, translucent fiberglass bubbles delicately rise from the seascape of sculptural forms appearing to connect water with the atmosphere above it. Everything works well together.

"As water has been the inherent subject of my work, I think of the ocean as one of God's life-giving gifts, cradling the universe in its silent and gentle waves, all its sparkling bubbles blowing upwards and baring its soul to the world—as if showing the path toward heaven," says the artist when asked about her inspiration.

Mergers

In some sculptures, sleek marble shafts hold bubbles of polished stainless steel spheres at eye level. The shiny spheres reflect the surroundings into kaleidoscopic infinity, merging ground with sky, sky with skyscrapers. Urban greenery visually connects to the clouds, and reflections of people merge with the urban environment.

Pilapil's spheres mirror another dimension in the familiar Makati urbanscape. They insinuate an ephemeral, inner landscape that lives within the polish of each sphere, establishing an introspective mood that leads the soul on a journey to its inner self.

The spaces and spheres are guides leading to a glimpse of universal infinity.

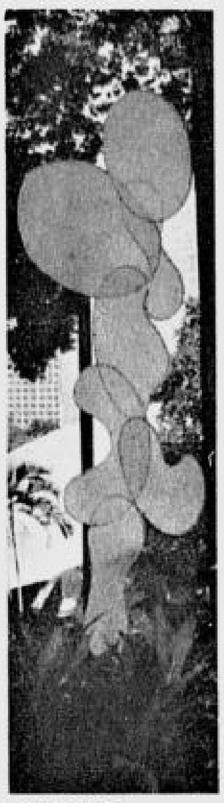
The dimension of inner peace that the sculptures invoke is long absent from our urban amenities. Calm is a quality that Manileños have learned to live without.

The exhibit shows the extent that public art enriches urban life. It shows that most types of art really are meant to be experienced by people and not kept out of reach in museums or locked away in private collections.

It further shows that good public art benefits city life. Imagine all Philippine cities, each enriched by public art so that not only does the quality of life improve, each city is imbued with a strong sense of identity and place.

What a shame that this exhibit ends on April 5. The temporary overlay it adds to enrich the quality of our urban lives should be made permanent.

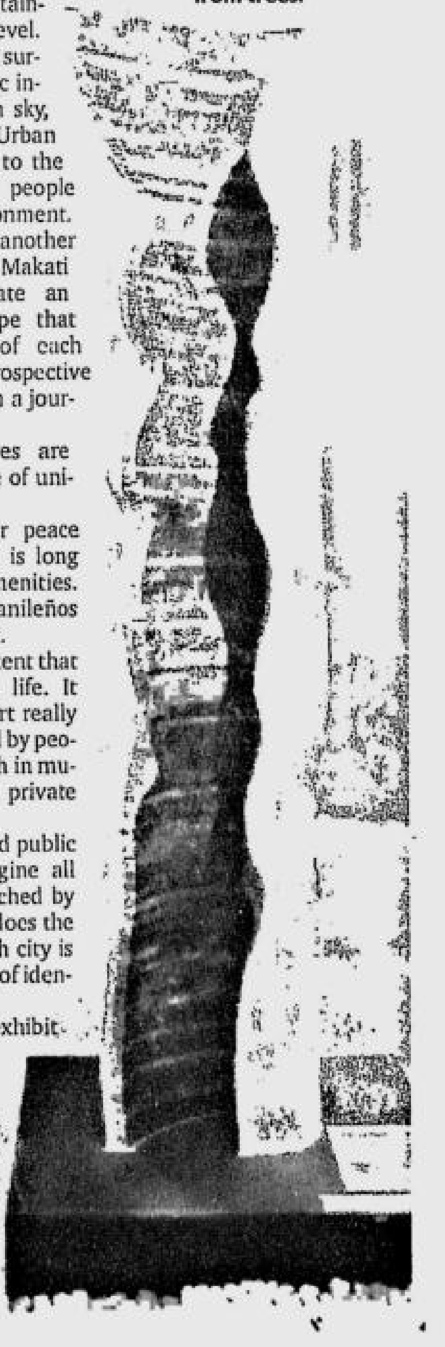
E-mail your comments and feedback to afvillalon@hotmail.com



PILAPIL'S forms contrast with nature and architecture in Makati.

SINUOUS forms of polished marble contrast with the architectural forms of Greenbelt Park.

SCULPTURAL waves rise out of the ground to metamorphose into bubbles hanging from trees.



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SAISAKI
SALMON & SCALLOP

The treasures of the sea have never been served more majestically than at SAISAKI. In Japan, the noble salmon and the regal scallop occupy the highest tiers in the grand hierarchy of seafood. Salmon has been long regarded as one of the world's most costly and delicately-flavored of fishes. Its legendary spawning habits,extreme native habitats, and the distinct pink color of its flesh set it apart from the rest. Great skill is required in its preparation, especially when adhering to the exacting principles of Japanese cuisine, arguably Asia's most elegant. It rarely meets its match on the plate or on the palate, and is almost always the star of the menu. The scallop is possibly best known for its beautiful and distinctive shell. It has been captured in works of art by Titan, Botticeli, and many others. Buildings in ancient Pompeii were decorated with scallop-shell ornaments. Its creamy white color and distinct, sweet flavor are only evident in the freshest stocks. A favorite delicacy in Japan, they can be prepared in myriad ways. Scallops are very versatile, and complement almost any dishe. Now at SAISAKI, a graceful symphony of tastes is being played out at the buffet table. The time has come to shine the spotlight on the inspired tandem of Salmon and Scallops. **Shake Sampi Shiru, Shake Kawa Gyoza, Shake Sanshoku Maki, Tairagai Tamago Mushi, Tairagai Kake Age, Tairagai Furai** and more of our Japanese Chef's exciting new creations stand proud amidst the other SAISAKI specialties. No Left Over Buffet Price P450 and P360 during promo days. Have a Japanese seafood adventure and you might get to savor something you've never tried before.

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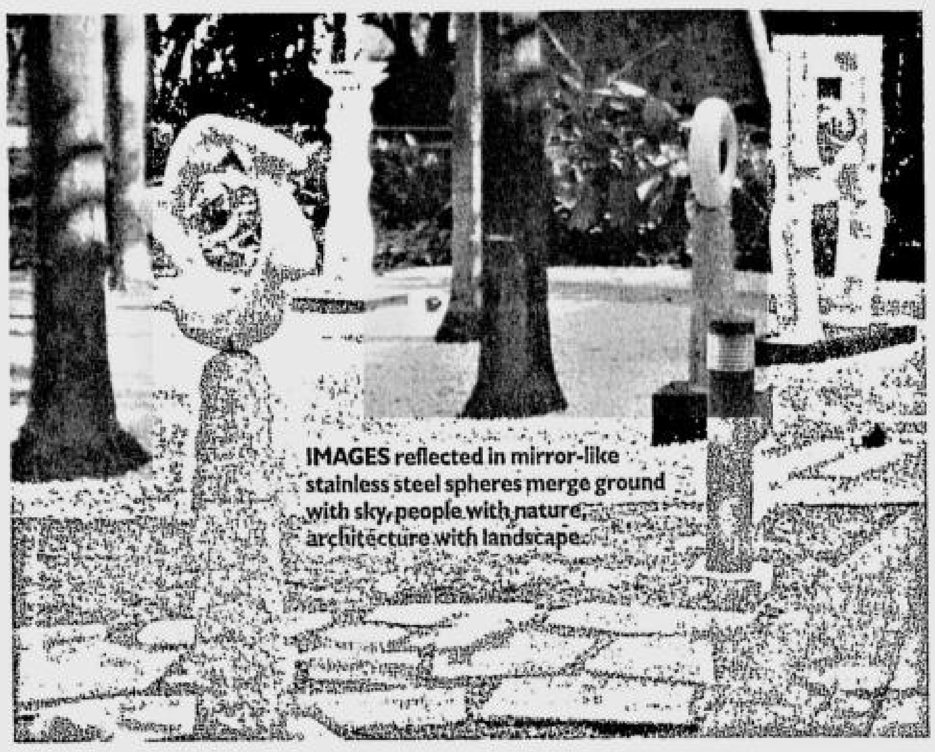
Outdoor sculpture for the soul



IMAGES reflected in mirror-like stainless steel spheres merge ground with sky, people with nature, architecture with landscape.

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

ONE of the rare expositions of public art in Manila is now at the Greenbelt 3 garden and Glorietta 4 park at Ayala Center. Large-scale work by multi-awarded sculptor Impy Pilapil, curated by Galeria Duemila, is on view until April 5.

So few urban amenities offer de-stressing alternatives for a Manileño to recharge his soul and mind. Recent projects, the new Liwasang Bonifacio Park, gentrification of the seaside promenade of Roxas Boulevard and pedestrianization of Rizal Avenue are initial attempts that provide escape valves but not enough to allow comfortable living in the city.

Public art is an overlooked urban amenity and awfully lacking in all Philippine cities. The Pilapil exhibit underscores the magnitude of that lack, illustrating that there is indeed a place for public art in our lives.

The artist's concept is to create an environment where everyone would be free to "mingle, touch, feel, reflect with, meditate with, or find some kind of soothing feelings with the work." She reaches out to her viewers, invites them to establish a relationship, no matter how fleeting, with her work.

Within public reach

The exhibit is completely experiential. The large sculptures stand on ground level. Others hang from trees. This is not the usual "look-only" exhibit with art pieces secured and kept out of public reach.

On the contrary, the series of sculptures is completely accessible to the public. The pieces invite visitors to walk around them, take a close look, touch and experience Pilapil's art.

The exhibit brings art to the people. Unlike in the traditional museum setting where art is detached from the viewer, Pilapil aims "to break the barriers that ordinary people feel exist when it comes to art." Breaking away from the elitist misconception of art, she invites the public to mingle and interact with her pieces.

The visual and tactile experience that her public sculpture offers is an opportunity for a viewer to "pause, reach out, and have time for oneself," Pilapil says. "It is my hope that each viewer will experience some kind of individual silence and inner peace."

Ocean of forms

The sculptures elicit peace. Elegantly conceived and meticulously executed in lustrous combinations of stone, marble, glass and stainless steel, each piece juxtaposes textures and contrasts materials that flow into an ocean of forms recalling the movement of water.

Inspired by the ocean, Pilapil's liquid shapes are undulating, upward-oriented forms in mirror-finished stainless steel that splash, grounded by sinuous multi-textured marble bases.

Her sculptures are ephemeral. Polished marble, glass and stainless steel capture the graceful motion of water, transmitting movement with strong visual clarity.

Hanging at different levels from tree branches, flat, translucent fiberglass bubbles delicately rise from the seascape of sculptural forms appearing to connect water with the atmosphere above it. Everything works well together.

"As water has been the inherent subject of my work, I think of the ocean as one of God's life-giving gifts, cradling the universe in its silent and gentle waves, all its sparkling bubbles blowing upwards and baring its soul to the world—as if showing the path toward heaven," says the artist when asked about her inspiration.

Mergers

In some sculptures, sleek marble shafts hold bubbles of polished stainless steel spheres at eye level. The shiny spheres reflect the surroundings into kaleidoscopic infinity, merging ground with sky, sky with skyscrapers. Urban greenery visually connects to the clouds, and reflections of people merge with the urban environment.

Pilapil's spheres mirror another dimension in the familiar Makati urbanscape. They insinuate an ephemeral, inner landscape that lives within the polish of each sphere, establishing an introspective mood that leads the soul on a journey to its inner self.

The spaces and spheres are guides leading to a glimpse of universal infinity.

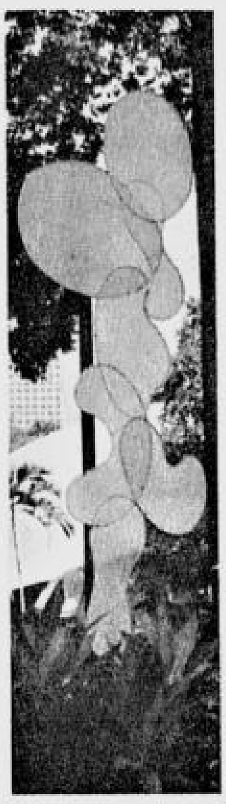
The dimension of inner peace that the sculptures invoke is long absent from our urban amenities. Calm is a quality that Manileños have learned to live without.

The exhibit shows the extent that public art enriches urban life. It shows that most types of art really are meant to be experienced by people and not kept out of reach in museums or locked away in private collections.

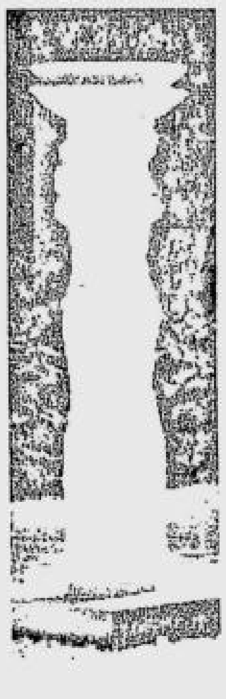
It further shows that good public art benefits city life. Imagine all Philippine cities, each enriched by public art so that not only does the quality of life improve, each city is imbued with a strong sense of identity and place.

What a shame that this exhibit ends on April 5. The temporary overlay it adds to enrich the quality of our urban lives should be made permanent.

E-mail your comments and feedback to afvilalon@hotmail.com



PILAPIL'S forms contrast with nature and architecture in Makati.



SINUOUS forms of polished marble contrast with the architectural forms of Greenbelt Park.

SCULPTURAL waves rise out of the ground to metamorphose into bubbles hanging from trees.

"THE BEST OF THREE WORLDS"

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KAMAYAN
Sikat Noon
Sikat Ngayon

The Filipino palate is hardest to please when fed its own cuisine. This is because the Filipino diner knows exactly how every dish is supposed to taste. And he raises each dish to a higher standard, be it his lola's traditional recipe or his hometown fiesta specialty. So it is truly a mark of distinction when a Filipino restaurant earns his approval. Back when local fare was limited to carinderias and turo-turo, KAMAYAN, the first and the original Filipino fine dining restaurant captured that authentic Filipino taste that kept diners coming back for more. Every so often the KAMAYAN chefs would whip up festival specialties,available on the menu for only a limited time. However, once tasted, the public would demand their return. And now Kamayan brings back all your old loves and all time favorites. **Sitsaron Balat ng Manok, Chicken Binakol, Sabaw ng Biyas, Mechado, Kaldereta Baka sa Gata and the classic Kamayan Lechon de Leche plus a lot more.** Indulge in a lavish buffet spread wide with Filipino comfort food and fiesta fare for only P275 No Left Over Buffet Price. Be spoiled for choices and overwhelmed with your options. More of the usual made perfect, Kamayan's Sikat Noon, Sikat Ngayon.

SAISAKI
SALMON & SCALLOP

The treasures of the sea have never been served more majestically than at SAISAKI. In Japan, the noble salmon and the regal scallop occupy the highest tiers in the grand hierarchy of seafood. Salmon has been long regarded as one of the world's most costly and delicately-flavored of fishes. Its legendary spawning habits,extreme native habitats, and the distinct pink color of its flesh set i apart from the rest. Great skill is required in its preparation especially when adhering to the exacting principles Japanese cuisine, arguably Asia's most elegant. It rarel meets its match on the plate or on the palate, and is almost always the star of the menu. The scallop is possibly [illegible] known for its beautiful and distinctive shell. It has been captured in works of art by Titan, Botticeli, and many others. Buildings in ancient Pompeii were decorated with scallop-shell ornaments. Its creamy white color and distinct, sweet flavor are only evident in the freshest stocks. A favorite delicacy in Japan, they can be prepared in myriad ways. Scallops are very versatile, and complement almost any dishe. Now at SAISAKI, a graceful symphony of tastes is being played out at the buffet table. The time has come to shine the spotlight on the inspired tandem of Salmon and Scallops. **Shake Sampi Shiru, Shake Kawa Gyoza, Shake Sanshoku Maki, Tairagai Tamago Mushi, Tairagai Kake Age, Tairagai Furai** and more of our Japanese Chef's exciting new creations stand proud amidst the other SAISAKI specialties. No Left Over Buffet Price P450 and P360 during promo days. Have a Japanese seafood adventure and you might get to savor something you've never tried before.

DADS
Cucina dela Mancha
Dads Spanish Festival Buffet

History has made Manila into one of the great centers of Spanish-influenced cuisine in the world. This month DADS ULTIMATE BUFFET looks back to the mother country,the land of bullfights and flamenco, for culinary inspiration. Our master chefs put their spin on Spain when Dads' continental cuisine focuses on the Iberian Peninsula. Get ready to run with the bulls, clap your castanets, and march to the Latino beat of Cucina de la Mancha, the DADS SPANISH FESTIVAL BUFFET. From simple traditional fare to elaborate delicacies, each dish simmers with hot-blooded Hispanic passion as we feature a cuisine close to our hearts. Prepare to dine on a feast grand enough to grace the haciendas of old, with recipes and ingredients straight from the kitchens of Madrid and Barcelona. Es muy magnifico y muy delicioso para seguro! The celebrated Spanish seafood dish **Zarzuela De Mariscos** is made sublime by fresh seafood from Philippine waters. **Codillo ala Alemana** (pig knuckles), **Gambas Granadinas, Mariscada** (seafood with tomato sauce) and familiar favourites like **Paella, Callos, and Lengua** are all treated to La Preparacion Especial de Dads. Salud!

The world's best cuisines now at your fingertips when you choose to fill your plate at the Dads Ultimate Buffet. You can go continental and serve yourself **roast beef, turkey, pasta, salads** and other featured festival dishes. At the same time, your cravings for Filipino favourites and Japanese specialties can be fully satisfied as both the Kamayan and Saisaki buffets are included in the Ultimate Buffet experience. At No Leftover price of P495 at P395 on special promo days. For reservations, call your nearest DADS, KAMAYAN and SAISAKI.

way to go
Ultimate Graduation Celebration!

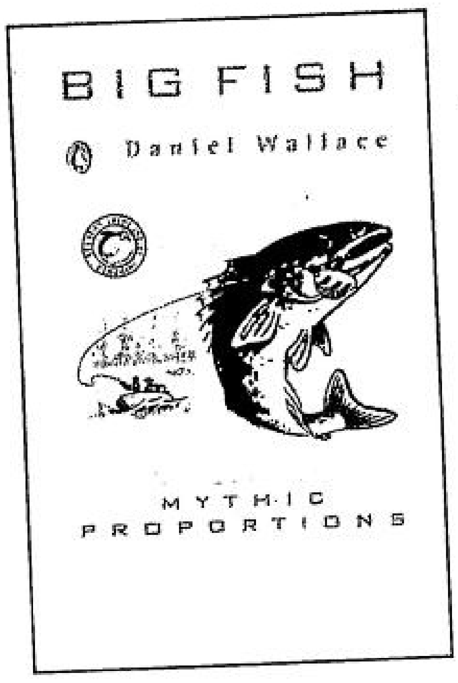
A son's tale, a father's lyrical sense of embroidery

By Christine Godinez-Ortega
PDI Mindanao Bureau

REVIEW

MY occasional *maman*, Chari Cruz Lucero, convinced me to get the spare novel, "Big Fish" (Penguin Books, 1998, 180 pages), buried among the more hyped-up book titles at a Makati bookstore, so I could submit an "unusual" reading report to my mentor, Cirilo Bautista. That was two years ago.

A SON'S/ F3



This first novel by Daniel Wallace has been recently turned into a movie, with Albert Finney, Jessica Lange and Ewan McGregor in the lead roles

Getaway

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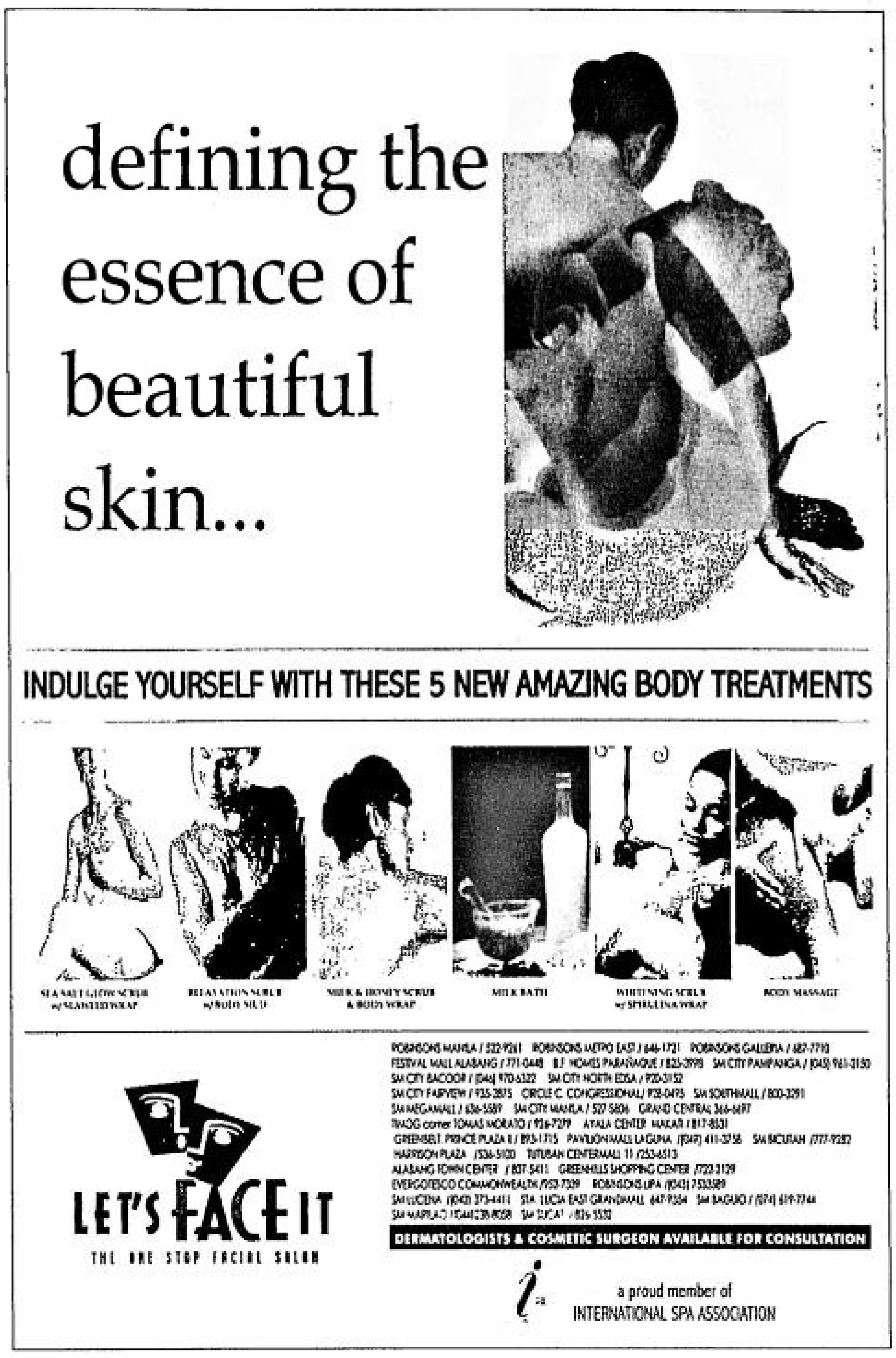
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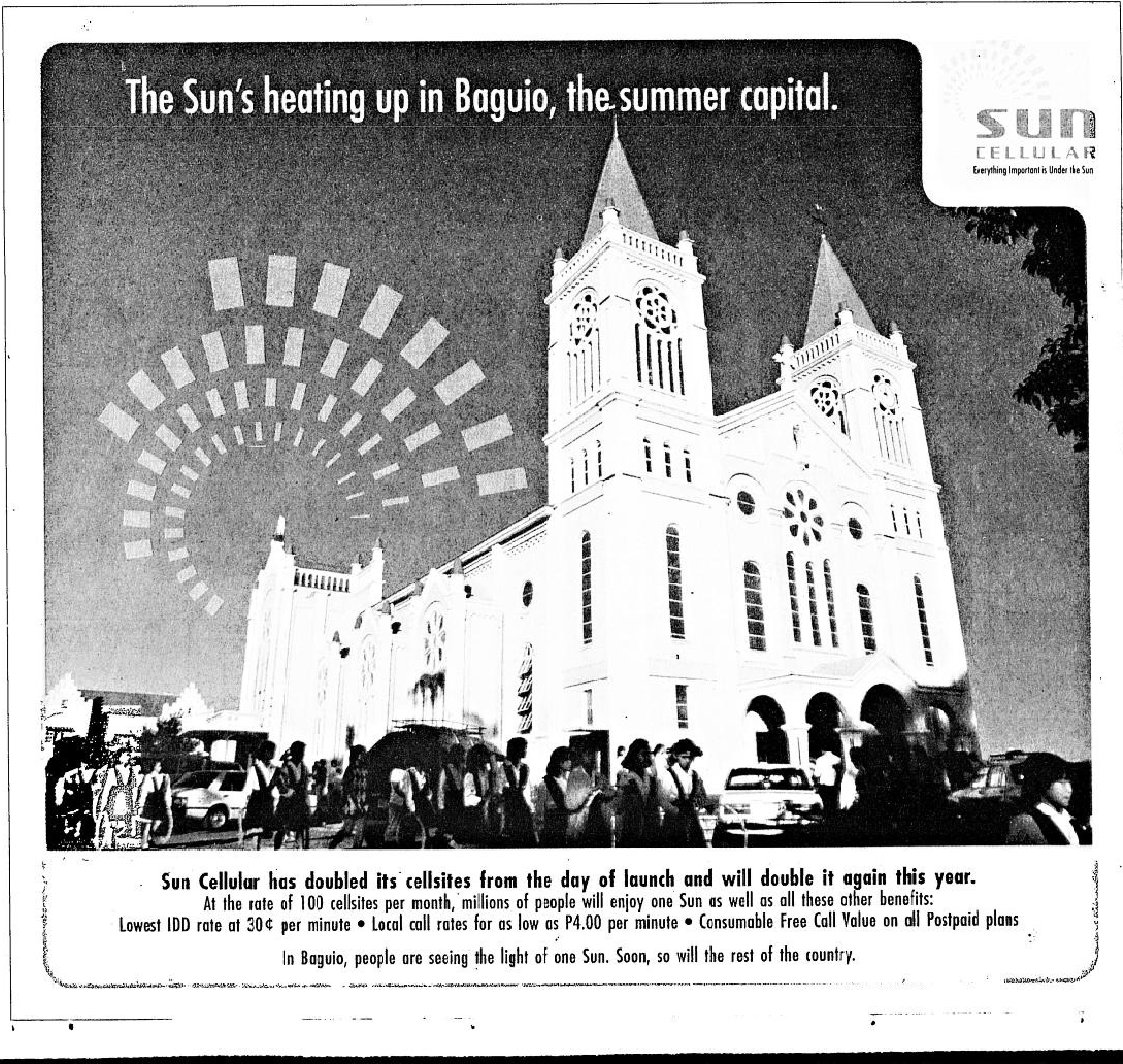
The Sun's heating up in Baguio, the summer capital.

SUN CELLULAR
Everything Important is Under the Sun

Sun Cellular has doubled its cellsites from the day of launch and will double it again this year.
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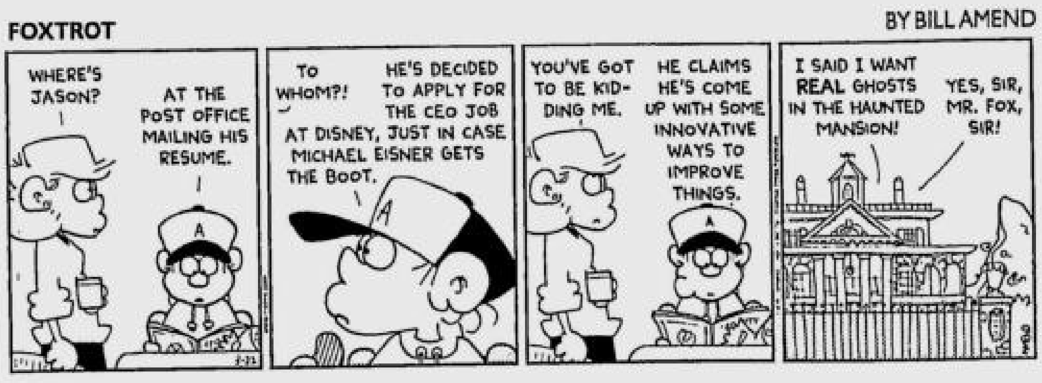
In Baguio, people are seeing the light of one Sun. Soon, so will the rest of the country.

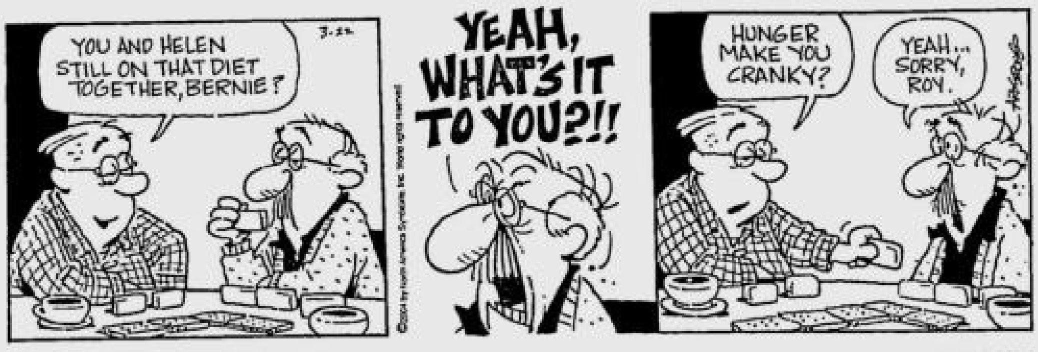
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


WHERE'S JASON?
AT THE POST OFFICE MAILING HIS RESUME.
TO WHOM?!
HE'S DECIDED TO APPLY FOR THE CEO JOB AT DISNEY, JUST IN CASE MICHAEL EISNER GETS THE BOOT.
YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING ME.
HE CLAIMS HE'S COME UP WITH SOME INNOVATIVE WAYS TO IMPROVE THINGS.
I SAID I WANT REAL GHOSTS IN THE HAUNTED MANSION!
YES, SIR, MR. FOX, SIR!

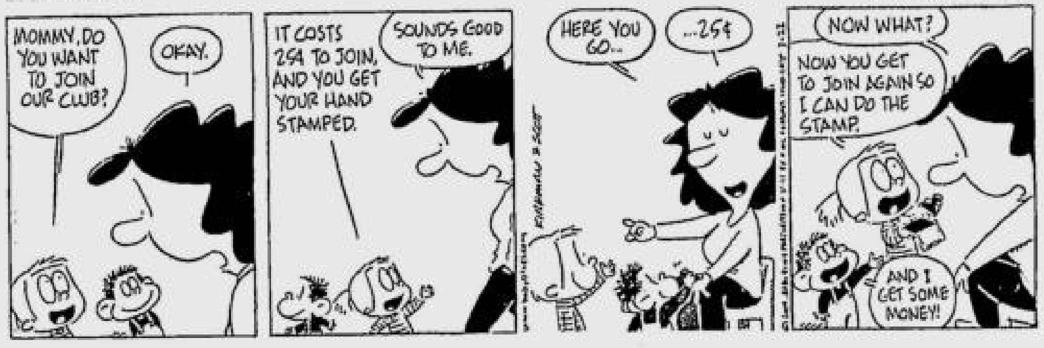
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


YOU AND HELEN STILL ON THAT DIET TOGETHER, BERNIE?
YEAH, WHAT'S IT TO YOU?!!
HUNGER MAKE YOU CRANKY?
YEAH... SORRY, ROY.

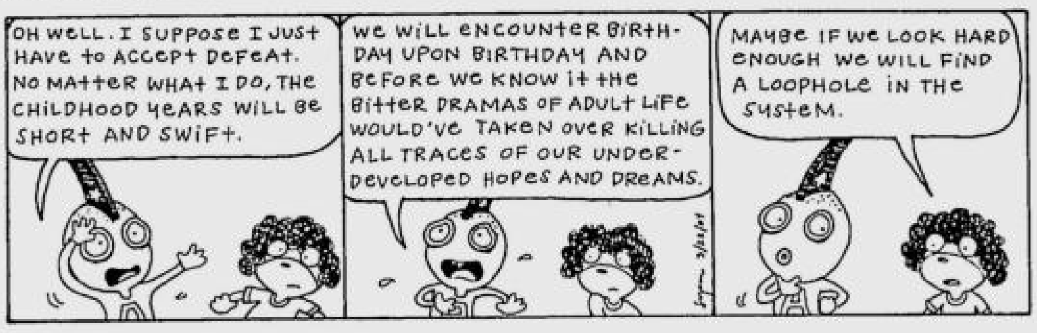
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


MOMMY, DO YOU WANT TO JOIN OUR CLUB?
OKAY.
IT COSTS 25¢ TO JOIN, AND YOU GET YOUR HAND STAMPED.
SOUNDS GOOD TO ME.
HERE YOU GO..
...25¢
NOW WHAT?
NOW YOU GET TO JOIN AGAIN SO I CAN DO THE STAMP.
AND I GET SOME MONEY!

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


OH WELL. I SUPPOSE I JUST HAVE TO ACCEPT DEFEAT. NO MATTER WHAT I DO, THE CHILDHOOD YEARS WILL BE SHORT AND SWIFT.
WE WILL ENCOUNTER BIRTHDAY UPON BIRTHDAY AND BEFORE WE KNOW IT THE BITTER DRAMAS OF ADULT LIFE WOULD'VE TAKEN OVER KILLING ALL TRACES OF OUR UNDER-DEVELOPED HOPES AND DREAMS.
MAYBE IF WE LOOK HARD ENOUGH WE WILL FIND A LOOPHOLE IN THE SYSTEM.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have a strong sense of self. You know how to direct your energy. Because of this, you're not easily led astray. You know what you want, and you know what you're doing. The archetype of the hero is a strong theme in your life. Be prepared to work hard in the year ahead for rewards and major changes in 2005.
Birthdate of: Elvis Stojko, skater; Reese Witherspoon, actress; Matthew Modine, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Think about how you can feel more secure about where you live. At this stage in your life, you need to stabilize your home environment in order to feel safe and sound.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Some of you will be entertaining a move through a change of residence or a change of job. Remind yourself to stay flexible. You will welcome whatever happens.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): It's important to establish a set of values that you can trust now and in the future. After all, you don't want to put your money on the wrong horse. You want to make solid decisions.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Some of you have to change your appearance and image now. This could necessitate a new wardrobe or a different approach to how you dress.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Continue to go through closets, cupboards, garages and lockers to get rid of whatever you don't need. It's time to dismantle much of your life. You're getting ready to move on.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): With Jupiter in your sign now, this is a very fortunate year for you! Think big and think positive. Expect the best.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): What you're doing now is either working out smoothly or it is abundantly apparent that it is not working at all! If it isn't working, that means you must change.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Your time of major success is about two years away. Believe in this and continue to work toward your goals. You won't regret it.

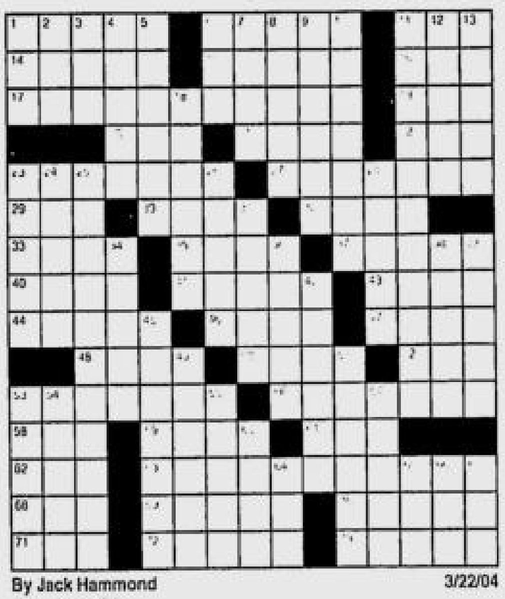
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Favorable career opportunities and influential people can boost your job this year. This compensates setbacks that might occur if your partner brings in less money now.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): It's finally your turn to get some serious recognition. For the next seven years, your prime focus will be on your career and your external world.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Although you have to work hard now, people tend to give you things. Don't hesitate to accept these gifts. How else can others practice generosity?

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): The major blessing that you receive this year is with respect to relationships, close friendships and your dealings with the public. Enjoy your good fortune!

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Jack Hammond
Savannah, GA

3/22/04

ACROSS
1 Noted fabulist
6 Mazda model
11 Play about Capote
14 Pipe type
15 Writer Chekhov
16 With it, once
17 Subject of this puzzle
19 Adam's mate
20 Small hotel
21 "Why __ Thou forsaken me?"
22 Firearm
23 Central Park designer
27 Mixed
29 Dien Bien __
30 Orange-red chalcedony
32 Hook's first mate
33 "High Hopes" lyricist
35 Poet Teasdale
37 Make into law
40 Aoki of golf
41 J.R. or Jock
43 Gillette blade
44 Florida city
46 Type of lily
47 Vault
48 Timbuktu land
50 Fine, dry particles
52 Sault __ Marie
53 Giving quarter
56 Splash and spot
58 City in Israel
59 On the ocean
61 Outer: pref.
62 Botanist Gray
63 1964 opponent of 17A
68 Barbara __ Geddes
69 Gage bestseller
70 School of Paris
71 R. Reagan's Star Wars
72 __ Hall University
73 Challenged

DOWN
1 Initial letters
2 Segment of history
3 Bro's counterpart
4 Desert spring
5 Writes letter by letter
6 Pas' mates
7 Ruler fraction
8 Bodybuilder Charles
9 L'chaim and prosit
10 Whenever
11 Sobriquet of 17A
12 Ziegfeld Follies, e.g
13 Overturn
18 Anxiety
23 In the work cited: Lat.
24 Capital of Tibet
25 17A since 1964
26 Ties
28 Of the kidneys
31 Like prunes
34 Stock certificate type
36 Novelist Wilson
38 Shipping container
39 Come to a point
42 Unquestioned principle
45 False names
49 Strip in a shoe
51 Traveled to the runway
53 Weighty pieces
54 Struck a stance
55 "The Screens" dramatist
57 Puccini opera
60 AD part
64 Yang partner
65 Rocky crag
66 Bullring shout
67 Actor Beatty

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

R	E	S	T	L	E	S	S	■	T	R	O	W	E	L
A	M	A	R	I	L	L	O	■	R	E	P	I	N	E
C	O	L	I	S	E	U	M	■	U	P	E	N	D	S
E	T	A	S	■	C	R	E	S	C	E	N	D	O	S
M	I	M	E	S	■	P	O	L	K	A	■	A	W	E
E	V	I	C	T	S	■	N	A	S	T	■	G	E	N
S	E	S	T	E	T	■	E	N	T	■	F	E	D	S
■	■	■	E	W	E	S	■	T	O	D	O	■	■	■
S	F	P	D	■	P	P	L	■	P	U	R	S	E	R
I	L	L	■	S	P	I	T	■	S	E	S	A	M	E
G	O	A	■	T	A	T	R	A	■	T	Y	P	A	L
N	O	N	P	A	R	E	I	L	S	■	T	I	N	A
O	R	N	A	T	E	■	D	E	A	D	H	E	A	T
R	E	E	L	I	N	■	E	N	C	E	I	N	T	E
A	D	D	I	C	T	■	R	E	S	E	A	T	E	D

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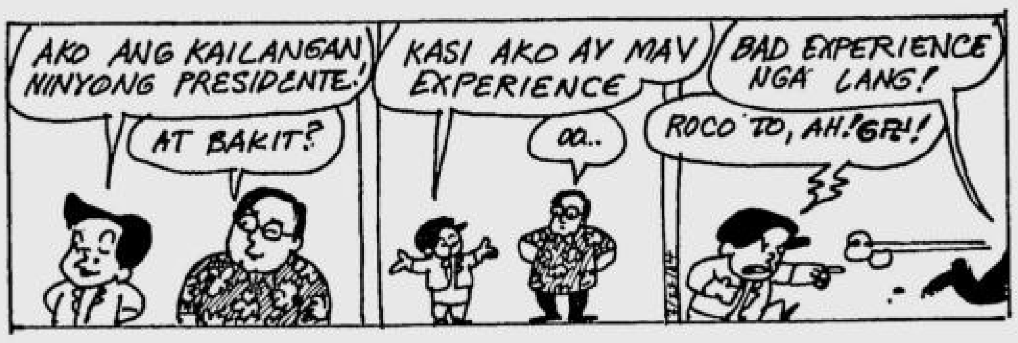
3/22/04

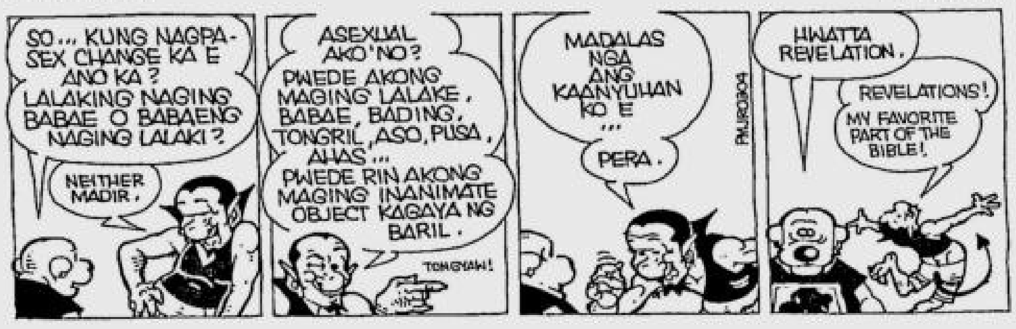
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


AKO ANG KAILANGAN NINYONG PRESIDENTE!
AT BAKIT?
KASI AKO AY MAY EXPERIENCE
OO..
BAD EXPERIENCE NGA LANG!
ROCO TO, AH! GR!

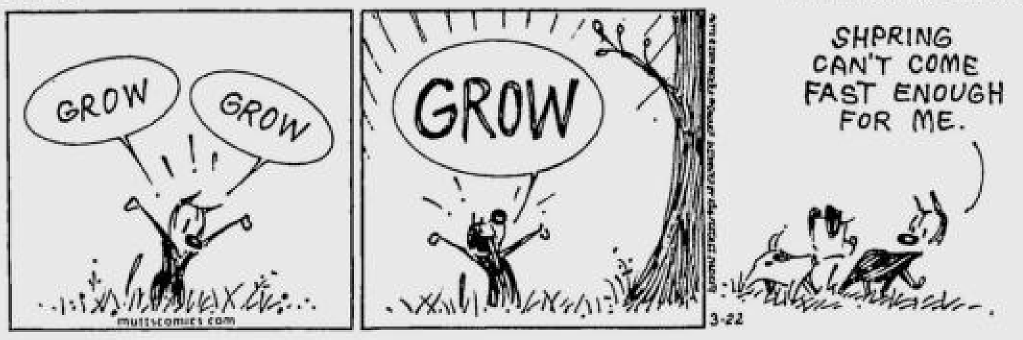
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


SO... KUNG NAGPA-SEX CHANGE KA E ANO KA? LALAKING NAGING BABAE O BABAENG NAGING LALAKI?
NEITHER MADIR.
ASEXUAL AKO 'NO? PWEDE AKONG MAGING LALAKE, BABAE, BADING, TONGRIL, ASO, PUSA, AHAS... PWEDE RIN AKONG MAGING INANIMATE OBJECT KAGAYA NG BARIL.
TONGYAW!
MADALAS NGA ANG KAANYUHAN KO E ...
PERA.
HWATTA REVELATION.
REVELATIONS! MY FAVORITE PART OF THE BIBLE!

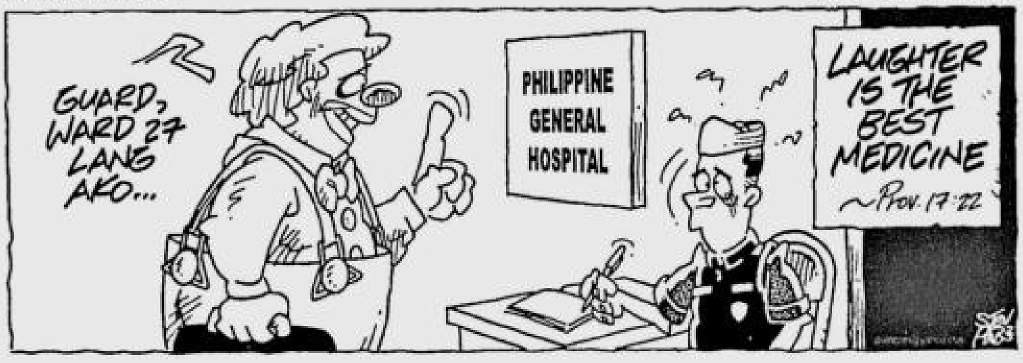
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


GROW
GROW
GROW
SHPRING CAN'T COME FAST ENOUGH FOR ME.
muttscomics.com
3-22

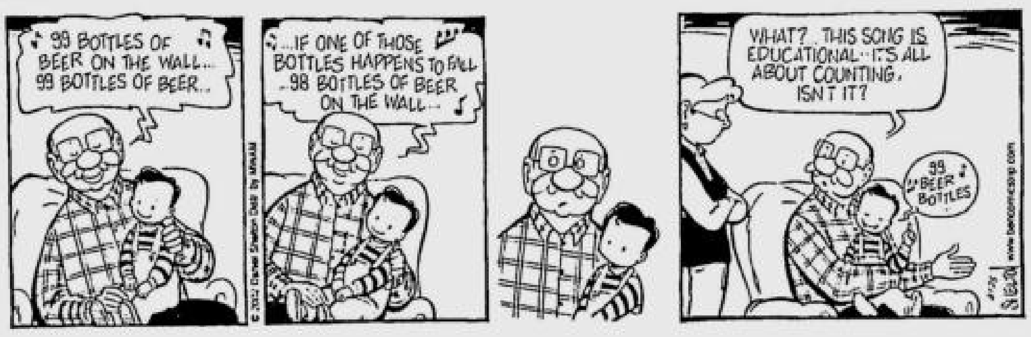
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


GUARD, WARD 27 LANG AKO...
PHILIPPINE GENERAL HOSPITAL
LAUGHTER IS THE BEST MEDICINE ~Prov. 17:22

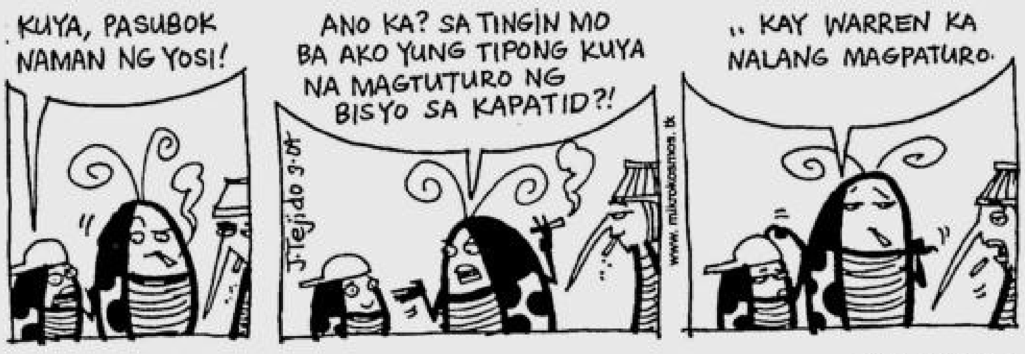
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


99 BOTTLES OF BEER ON THE WALL... 99 BOTTLES OF BEER...
...IF ONE OF THOSE BOTTLES HAPPENS TO FALL ..98 BOTTLES OF BEER ON THE WALL...
WHAT? THIS SONG IS EDUCATIONAL... IT'S ALL ABOUT COUNTING, ISN'T IT?
99 BEER BOTTLES

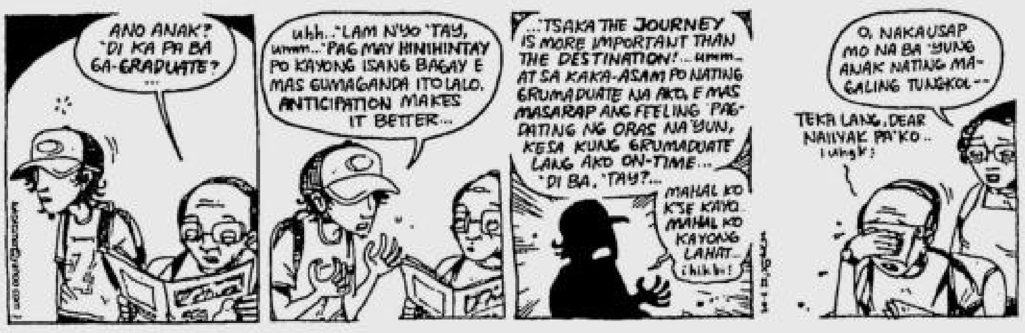
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


KUYA, PASUBOK NAMAN NG YOSI!
ANO KA? SA TINGIN MO BA AKO YUNG TIPONG KUYA NA MAGTUTURO NG BISYO SA KAPATID?!
.. KAY WARREN KA NALANG MAGPATURO.

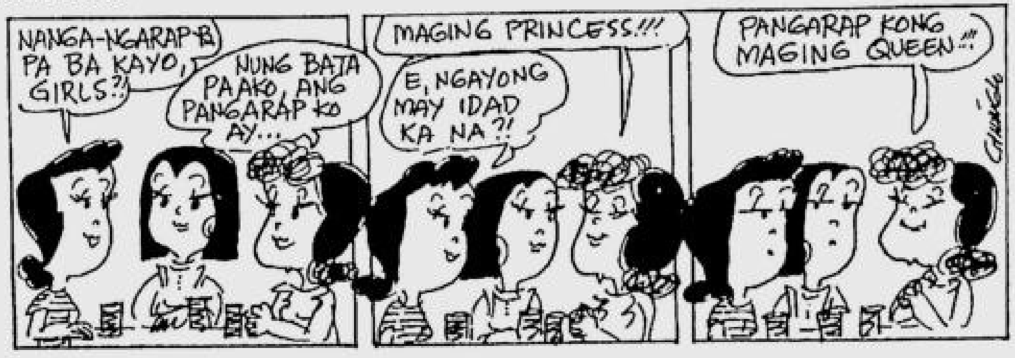
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


ANO ANAK? 'DI KA PA BA GA-GRADUATE? ...
uhh.. 'LAM N'YO 'TAY, umm... 'PAG MAY HINIHINTAY PO KAYONG ISANG BAGAY E MAS GUMAGANDA ITO LALO. ANTICIPATION MAKES IT BETTER...
...TSAKA THE JOURNEY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE DESTINATION! ...umm... AT SA KAKA-ASAM PO NATING GRUMADUATE NA AKO, E MAS MASARAP ANG FEELING 'PAG DATING NG ORAS NA 'YUN, KESA KUNG GRUMADUATE LANG AKO ON-TIME... 'DI BA, 'TAY?...
MAHAL KO K'SE KAYO. MAHAL KO KAYONG LAHAT... (hikhi!)
O, NAKAUSAP MO NA BA 'YUNG ANAK NATING MAGALING TUNGKOL--
TEKA LANG, DEAR NAIIYAK PA 'KO.. (ungk!)

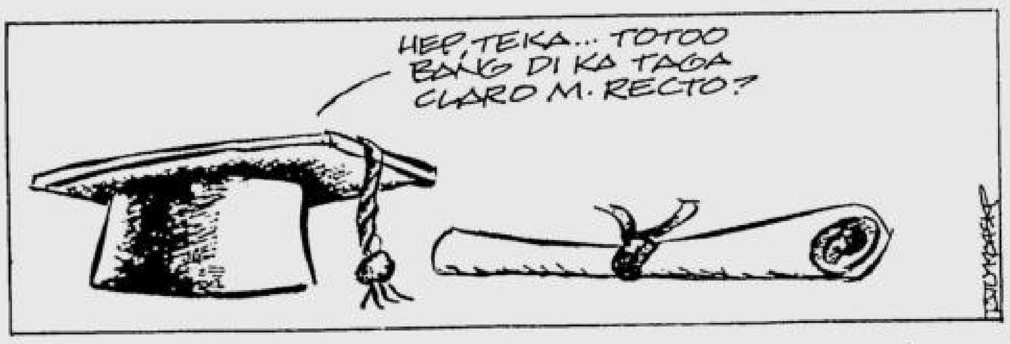
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


NANGA-NGARAP PA BA KAYO, GIRLS?!
NUNG BATA PA AKO, ANG PANGARAP KO AY...
MAGING PRINCESS!!!
E, NGAYONG MAY IDAD KA NA?!
PANGARAP KONG MAGING QUEEN!!!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


HEP, TEKA... TOTOO BANG DI KA TAGA CLARO M. RECTO?

A son's tale, a father's lyrical sense of embroidery

From page F1

This first novel by Daniel Wallace has been recently turned into a movie with the same title. In the lead roles are Albert Finney, Jessica Lange and Ewan McGregor.

The movie is produced by Bruce Cohen and Dan Jinks, the same producers of "American Beauty."

The advantage of a book-based movie is its strong narrative element and, in this case, Wallace's giving his novel a mythic character about a complex relationship between a father and a son.

The author himself admits (in a Q&A in the book) that the novel was based on his own experience with his father.

An oppressive hot day turns soggy when the main character, Edward Bloom's (Finney) birth brings on the rain in Part I.

Right off, the reader is seduced into believing that Bloom is a gifted child. He can talk to animals, he knows everybody by name in the community, he reads all the books in the library and he also grows up to be very tall.

Later on, people would tell his son William (Crudup) that his father "was a big fish, even then."

Episodic

All the stories in the novel are short, episodic and full of dialogue dramatizing Bloom's great labors (from Parts I to III) until he becomes a rich man.

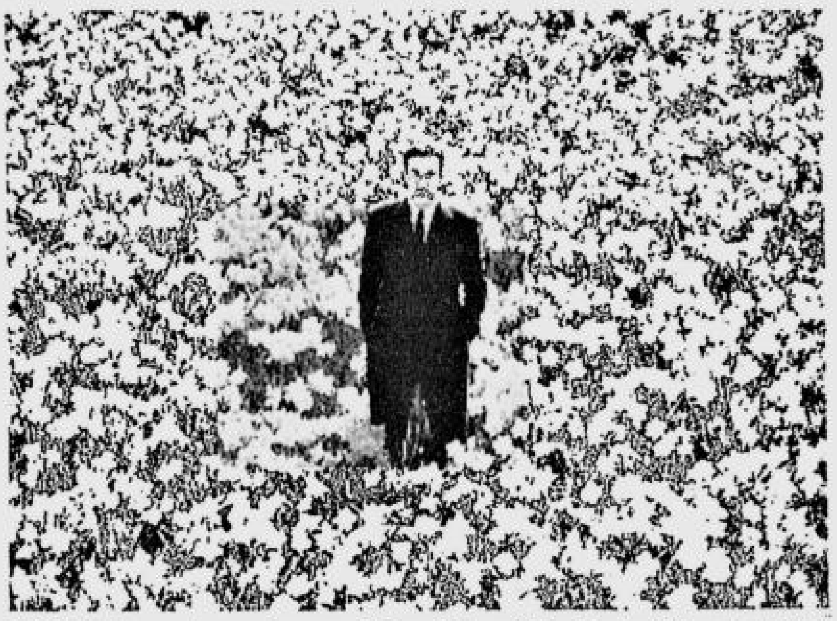
We now see the 40-ish Bloom wanting to buy a town simply because he wants to. Capping Bloom's success story is his meeting the beautiful, 20-year old Jenny Hill, who refuses to sell her property but becomes his mistress anyway. He puts her up in a white house, and the townspeople feel free to embellish their own stories of how Bloom met her.

Contrary to other kinds of modern fiction, which "focuses on states of being" and where changes are minimal, this novel has many changes or reversals: the dying Bloom with his scaly skin is transformed into a "fish," reinforcing the novel's fish image and water metaphor; and where before father and son were alienated, now they want to understand each other, although the reader knows all along that son William has always seen beyond his father's personality and his jokes.

In between these three parts, William sees his father in four versions or "takes" at his deathbed, scenes that parallel the repeated appearances of the groundhog in the movie, "A Groundhog Day."

In these four takes, we see William and his mother, "the good wife" (Lange), ushering in the old Dr. Bennètt four times, too, checking on the dying Bloom. Instead of the 99-percent repetition of events as in "Groundhog Day," the reader sees a gradual deterioration of Bloom's condition and of old Dr. Bennett's aging at every house call.

Our advice: read the book, if possible, before watching the film, to better appreciate Wallace's invention of one Edward Bloom, gifted storyteller with (to borrow from Friedman) "a lyrical sense of embroidery."



EWAN McGregor stars as the young Edward Bloom in Tim Burton's film adaptation of "Big Fish."

New book on postcolonial Southeast Asia

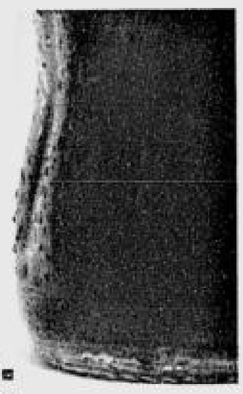
"POSTCOLONIALISM and Local Politics in Southeast Asia" by Japanese author Toh Goda compiles comparative studies of local politics and political culture in terms of the social integration in postcolonial insular Southeast Asia such as Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines.

The 328-page book attempts to clarify the influence of colonial knowledge on the relationship between the colonized and the colonizer, focusing on the postcolonial political situations as a local process of the deconstruction of the "colonial system."

In its 10 chapters, written by authorities in Asian history and ethnology, the book makes case studies of key Southeast Asian villages to serve as a microcosm of the impact of colonization.

"Through these studies, we hope to clarify the processes of the formation and transformation of ethnic identities and the dynamics of interethnic relations under various colonial and postcolonial situations," writes Goda, a professor of social anthropology in Kobe University.

Call New Day Publishers at 9288046 and 9275982 or e-mail newdayorders@edsamail.com.ph.



POP:
Truth and Power at the Coca-Cola Company

IN "POP: Truth and Power at the Coca-Cola Company," New York Times reporter Constance L. Hays examines the 116-year history of Coke by describing the charismatic, driven men who have made Coke the world's best-known brand. It is Powerbooks' Book of the Month and available at Powerbooks stores at Greenbelt (7576428), Megamall (6352892), Alabang (8505662) and Glorietta (7527075).

Revised edition of Lynch essays to be launched

THE INSTITUTE of Philippine Culture of the Ateneo de Manila University will launch the revised edition of "Philippine Society and the Individual, Selected Essays of Frank Lynch," on March 25, 1:30 p.m., at the Social Development Complex Conference Room of the Ateneo de Manila.

The revised edition, writes Dr. Mary Racelis in her extensive introduction, "aims to expose a new generation of students and scholars to the foundations of social science research in the country, exemplified by Frank Lynch's seminal readings." Gathered under this "portable archive" are his classic works on 1) values, class stratification and elites; 2) techniques and methodology in research; 3) religion: belief systems and practice, 4) the minorities; 5) agrarian issues and problems, and 6) West meets East.

Dr. Filomeno V. Aguilar Jr., new director of the IPC, calls the book "an indispensable starting point for the contemporary student and analyst."

The book, published for the IPC by the Ateneo de Manila University Press, will soon be available at bookstores nationwide. (Ateneo Press, tel. 4265984, 4266001 local 4612/16; e-mail unipress@admu.edu.ph)

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5. Every text message sent costs P2.50.

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SMART Buddy (Promo Duration: Feb. 28-March 30, 2004)
1. Buy a SMART Buddy 64K Super SIM 2 for only P199 at any SMART Wireless Centers nationwide and get a NESTEA Beach Volley Million Plunge scratch card for free.
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4. Every text message sent costs P2.50.

- Only 1 name can be registered per cellphone number.
- Last day of texting entries will be on March 30, 2004.
- Participants will automatically receive a text message confirming receipt of the raffle entry. Winners will be drawn using electronic raffle draw.
- Draw date is on March 31, 2004, 2 pm at Information Gateway, Inc. office at 1401 West Tower, Philippine Stock Exchange Center, Exchange Road, Ortigas.
- Winners will be notified via phone call from a special number and registered mail.
- A participant can win only once. If a name wins more than once, he gets the bigger prize.
- Winners need to present the registered mail, SMART SIM card together with valid ID and the winning sticker and the NESTEA refill pack or frequency card with 3 NESTEA logo stamps or scratch card to claim their prize at the NESTLÉ office, 31 Plaza Drive Rockwell Center, Makati. For provincial winners, prizes may be claimed at the nearest NESTLÉ office specified in the registered notice.
- If the winner comes from the school category, they must present the winning scratch card with complete and valid NESTEA logo stamps. Only completely stamped and validated scratch cards will be honored.
- Trip to Boracay prizes should be confirmed on or before April 11, 2004. The 1 Million pesos and cellphone prizes may be claimed within 60 days from notification.
- Trips are transferable but not convertible to cash.
- Trips to Boracay are only valid from April 16-18 during the NESTEA Beach Volley 2004 Finals.
- Employees of NESTLÉ Philippines, Publicis Manila, SMART Communications, Inc., Information Gateway, Inc., TOPBEST Printing Corp., Transprint, ZenithOptimedia, Rapp Collins, NEXT, Spike, Ace, Spark, all participating groceries, supermarket, schools, restaurants including their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining the promotion.
- NESTLÉ PHILIPPINES shall shoulder the 20% tax for prizes exceeding P10,000.00.
- Promo period is from Feb. 1 to March 30, 2004.

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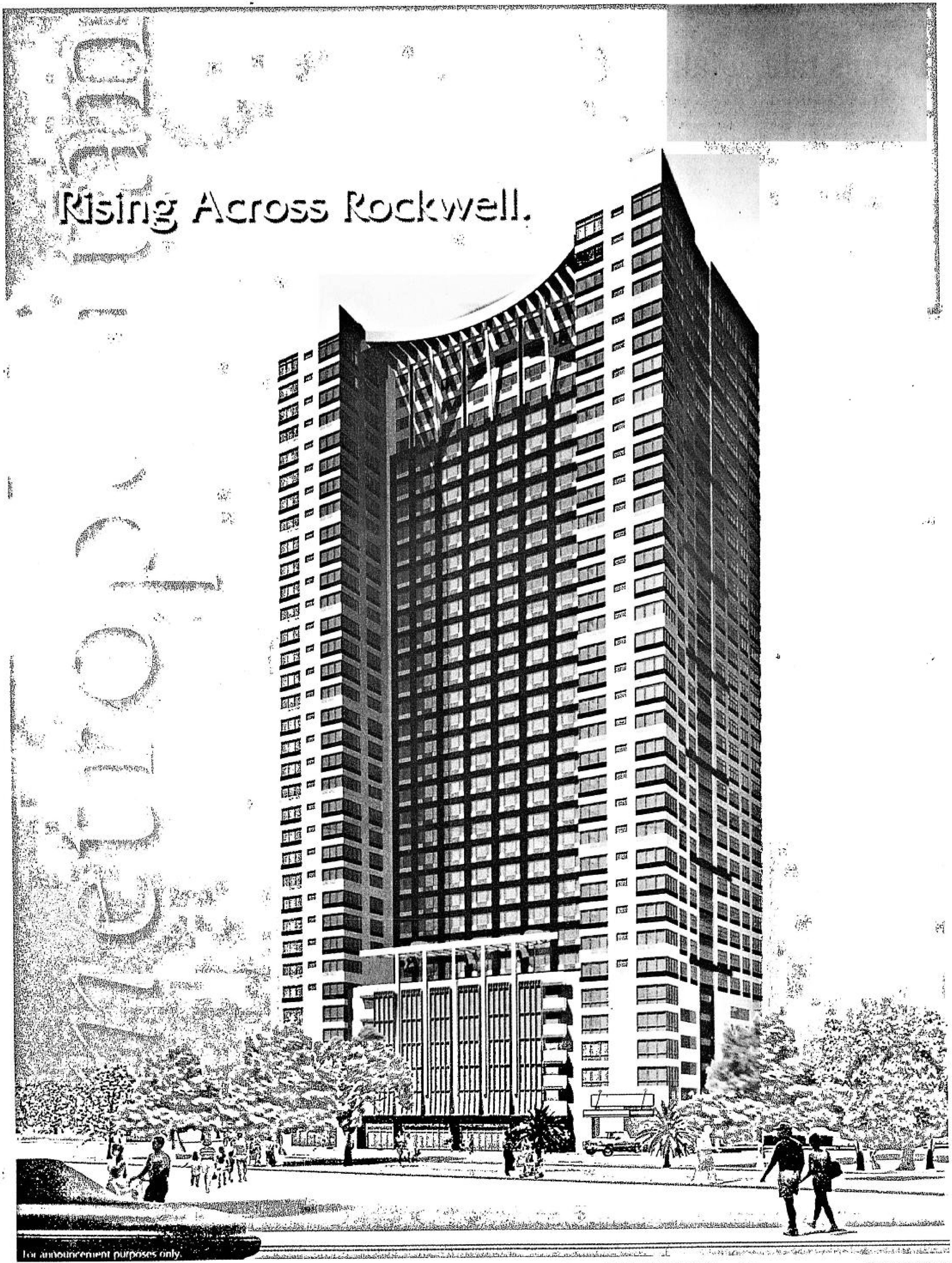
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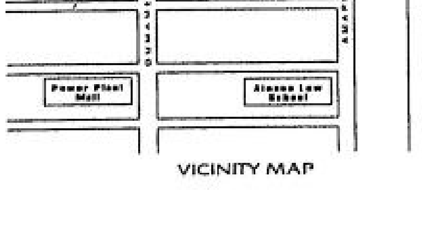
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